The Muslim Voice

November 2003 Volume 10 Issue 2 Ramadan Edition

From the News Desk
pg 8

Be on the Scene and
Be Proactive
pg 12

The Objectives of
Fasting
pg 13

Journey to Islam
pg 18

PLEASE TREAT THIS ISLAMIC JOURNAL WITH RESPECT
Published by the Muslim Students' Association at the University of Toronto
(St. George Campus) and sponsored in part by SAC.

M029-001

Sound Vision

Visit our expanded store! Lots of new items!

- Quran ◆ Books ◆ Audio
- Video ◆ CDs ◆ Software
- Gifts ◆ Games ◆ Web &
- Graphic Design and more

Islamic Books & Things

Toll-Free Orderline:
1-800-560-8754

61 Dundas St W
Mississauga, Ontario, L5B 1H7
(West of Hurontario & Dundas)

9 am - 9 pm
7 days a week!

Phone: (905) 566-1444 ◆ Fax: (905) 566-1443

www.SoundVisionCanada.com

THE MUSLIM VOICE

Editor:
Zeenat Malam

Assistant Editors:
Farhan M. Asrar, Fatima Butt

Executive Assistant:
Sayam Masood

Section Editors:
Yasmeen Khan, Aminah Khan, Aneesa Patel, Sanober Motiwala, Rabiya Morisiya

Writers:
Fahad Kamal, Mohammed Rustom, Yusra Ahmad, Humza Jawaid, Asma Ali, S. M. Ahmed Badruddin, Nuzhat Khurshid, Ayesha Sharieff, Fatima Butt, Taha Ghayyur, Anna Ahmad, Sameem Hafeez, Abdullah Misra, Amal A. Mohamed, Mohammed Alameddine, Nosheen Mian

Layout Team:
Zeenat Malam, Andaleeb Mustaq, Farhan M. Asrar, Fatima Butt

Distribution Coordinator:
Nuzhat Khurshid

Webmaster:
Zulfiqar Ali Khan

Advertising Coordinator:
Khalidah Ali

Advisor:
Noor Aliya Javed

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Desk of: The Muslim Voice....3
Opinions & Analyses....5
Flashbacks....6
From the News Desk....8
3 Nervous Soph... Plus 1 Hip Frosh....10
The Blessed Month of Ramadan....11
Be on the Scene and Be Proactive....12
The Objectives of Fasting....13
Upcoming Events....14
Journey to Islam....18
Poetry Corner....22
Great Muslim: Salman the Persian....24
Great Muslimah: Umm Darda Al-Sughra....26
Crossword....28

The Muslim Voice
c/o Muslim Students' Association
21 Sussex Avenue, Suite 405, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1J6
E-mail: muslimvoice@yahoo.ca Phone: 416-946-7788
TMV Online! Visit us on the web at: www.tmv.ca

The Muslim Voice is a non-profit magazine published by the Muslim Students' Association at the University of Toronto, St. George Campus

Cover design by Louie El Sabeq
The Muslim Voice Logo designed by Abeer Chaudhury, University of Toronto (St. George Campus)

TORONTO SHARIAH PROGRAM

Course Components

Arabic, Tajweed Aqidah
Fiqh al-Hanafiyya and Usul al-Fiqh
Hadith studies, Tafsir, Seerah

A 5 year part-time program of Shariah studies tailored specifically for English speakers who are also working or studying; fulltime study also available, ideal for recent graduates and sisters without young children.

Course Highlights

Classical texts read in their original Arabic (classroom instruction in English)
Weekend and weekday programs
Qualified teachers who have studied at madrassas or under shuyukh including Mufti Taqi Usmani

Part-time: Sat, Sun 8:30am-2:30pm starting Dec 2003 for both brothers and sisters (Madrassatul Banaat, Rexdale)

Full-time: Mon-Thu 9am-3pm, Sisters starting Dec 2003, Brothers Feb 2004, in Thorncliffe

www. Shariahprogram.ca info@shariahprogram.ca (647) 225-2546

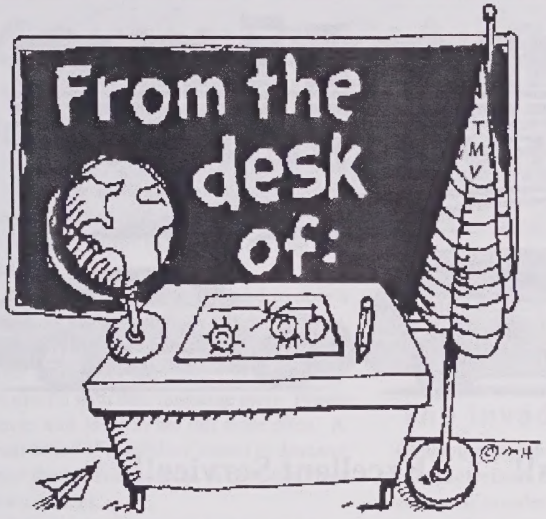
Habib's Islamic Book Store

20 Rexdale Blvd., Etobicoke, Ontario

Tel.: 416-743-6317
Fax: 416-762-2469

Providing the community with books, perfumes, Islamic gifts, hijaabs, Islamic clothing, and more!

www.habibsbookstore.com



The Muslim Voice

Assalaamu alaikum,

First and foremost I would like to wish you a heartfelt Ramadan *Mubarak* on behalf of The Muslim Voice staff. May Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala*) accept our fasting and our prayers. *Allahumma ta qab al-siyamana wa ta qab al-qiyamana.*

With this month comes great opportunity: the *shayateen* are chained, the gates of *jahannam* are closed shut, and the gates of *jannah* are open wide. Blessings are amplified, mercy is abound; forgiveness is ample, emancipation is waiting to be found. What better time than this to serve our Lord through service to his creation?

Serving our community, both on-campus and off, was the focus of this year's annual *Marhaba* Dinner. The message was simple: Get Involved! It was a poignant reminder to students that life exists outside of the library. If we look at the microcosm of our campus community, it is evident that much work needs to be done. There are so many clubs, groups, and organizations that are constantly looking for volunteers to do work for the community. If we look beyond this small part of the greater community, we will come to realize that the opportunity to provide service to others is endless.

Although not the only means to serve our community, the MSA is one organization that provides many opportunities for you to help your Muslim brothers and sisters on campus. Whether it be volunteering or coordinating, there are so many groups within the MSA that need committed volunteers to run smoothly.

Take your nose out of your textbook for a split second and … get involved! You absorb endless amounts of information from lectures and textbooks, but what are you giving the university in return? You enjoy food at the daily *iftars* on campus and make use of the prayer space provided, but what did you do to help bring them about? What will you do to keep these things going? Most importantly, Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala*) showers blessings upon every one of us each day. Some we realize, most we overlook.

Then which of the Favours of your Lord will you deny?
[Qur'an, 55:16]

What have you done lately to show Him your appreciation?

Before we know it, our university career will be over and we'll enter a routine of working for half the day and taking care of our families the other half. As we grow older, free time becomes sparse and energy fades. Get involved now, while you have the chance. Use it as an opportunity to build your skills and to earn rewards from Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala*). Furthermore, you'll come to realize that, with pure intentions, working in the path of Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala*) is a reward in itself. *SubhanAllah*, we're enjoying the presence of Ramadan. This is the month of new beginnings; why not start now? After all, there literally is 'no time like the present.'

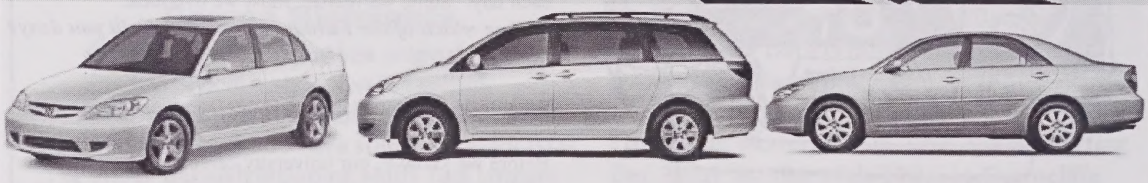
The Muslim Voice staff hopes that you all have a Ramadan filled with mercy, forgiveness, and emancipation from hellfire. May Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala*) forgive our sins and accept our fasts and good deeds. *Ameen.* We would also like to extend our wishes for a joyous *Eid-ul-fitr* to you and your families.

Zeenat Malam
Editor, *The Muslim Voice*
Wasalaamu alaikum

We want to hear from YOU! Send us your opinions, articles, stories, poetry or any comments, questions or suggestions to:
muslimvoice@yahoo.ca

The next submission deadline is DECEMBER 20th, 2003

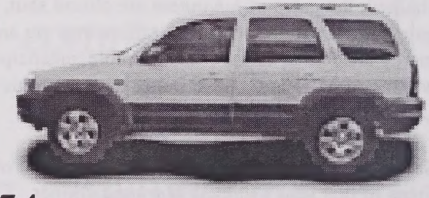
Destination
CAR AND TRUCK RENTALS™



New Cars!! **Great Rates!!** **Excellent Service!!**

WE RENT NEW CURRENT MODELS
CARS, VANS AND SUVs.

10% OFF
FOR ALL STUDENTS
(416) 693-7500



SCARBOROUGH
462 BIRCHMOUNT RD. UNIT # 54
CORNER OF DANFORTH & BIRCHMOUNT

Brampton North	Brampton South	BOLTON	KITCHNER
116 Rutherford Rd.	15 Van Kirk Dr. S.	12500 HWY#50	652 Fairway Rd
905-459-584859	905-951-7400	905-796-0529	519-896-3765

DESTINATIONCARTRUCK@BELLNET.CA

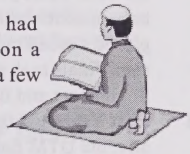
Opinions & Analyses

Spiritual Rollercoaster

Once again Ramadan is upon us. A time to look back and reflect on the past year, a time to look forward to a new year, and most importantly a time to recharge our spiritual batteries.

As Ramadan begins, we tend to note a change in the behaviour of fellow Muslims. People say *assalamalaikum* more, they smile more, they are polite more, and they are careful with their language more. Prayer places and *Masjids* are full more often. A great sense of discipline seems to descend upon the Muslim masses as they fast from dawn to dusk.

Our sins have greater penalties and our good deeds have greater rewards. As the month trudges on we feel a great sense of spiritual awakening and peace. Every time we are about to sin, our grumbling stomachs remind us and keep our actions in check. We want to help our brother or sister more so we can do as many good deeds while the returns are good.



The Qur'ans that had been gathering dust on a shelf for a few weeks, a few months, or more are brought down. These Qur'ans are recited more, memorized more, and contemplated upon more.

Three weeks into this holy month and one wishes it will never end. Alas, this spiritual bliss and contentment, this inner peace and submission, like all things in this temporal world of ours must indeed come to an end. Or should it?

In the world within which we live all things are temporary, except our connection with the Divine. This connection with the Eternal is from beyond this world and has no reason to ever end.

Yet as Ramadan ends we notice another change in our fellow Muslims. People say *assalamalaikum* less, they smile less, they are polite less, and they are careful with their language less. Prayer places and *Masjids* are full less often. Discipline seems to gradually erode, then disappear. Spiritually we begin to weaken, and the less fortunate among us begin to die. No longer is there the grumbling stomach to remind us and keep our actions in check. "Ramadan is gone, lets do something else now."

The Qur'ans are returned to their shelves to collect dust for a few weeks, a few months, or more. They are recited less, memorized less, and contemplated upon less. Three weeks and Ramadan is long forgotten.

And therein lies the tragic component of this yearly blessing.

Fahad Kamal, University of Toronto
1st yr, Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations

The Invaders *Within*

Contemporary Muslim political discourse is characterized by the dismay at the presence of invaders in Muslim lands. We all sympathize with the plight of our fellow co-religionists but what does this exactly mean? Do we do this on a level, transcending basic human emotions, knocking at the door of the heart and, ultimately, penetrating its walls, only to reside at its very Centre? Phenomenologically speaking, this is impossible.

But, we can certainly come close. There is a stark similarity between the invaders in the Middle East and the ones in our hearts. I take liberty in assuming we all know what and who these invaders are. For obviously, if we know the names of the invaders in Muslim lands, their policies, and even their next steps, we certainly know those which occupy and murder our hearts everyday. As for those who may not be aware of these internal invaders, I will simply say that they are those things in our hearts which keep us away from Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala*), Most High.

This analogy serves to indicate that we may be able to arrive at some type of a sympathetic, and perhaps even a phenomenological standpoint where we can "feel" for our fellow Muslims on levels that would have otherwise simply been impossible. In other words, if we understand that we too are being violated, that we too are victims of invasion- albeit of a different sort- we may be able to better understand, and perhaps even "empathize", with the plight of our brothers and sisters around the world.

Mohammed Rustom
University of Toronto (St. George)
Islamic Studies & Philosophy

Salaam: The Greeting of Paradise

How often do you pass by a sister or brother on this campus and fail to say, *"Assalamu Alaikum*, Peace be with you!"? It is a sad reflection of the state of our spirit when instead of greeting each other with joyous voices, we look the other way, pretending we didn't see that *muhajjiba* sister crossing our path. Even worse, sometimes one person says *salaam*, but the other person fails to respond. It is almost as if we were ashamed to reply.

Let us take a moment to remind ourselves that Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* is *As-Salaam*, the Source of Peace, and that we, as his worshippers, are the peacemakers. The Prophet Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* exhorted:

"O people! Spread salaam (greetings), feed the poor and needy, behave kindly to your relatives, offer prayer when others are asleep, and (thus) enter Paradise in peace"

[Related by Al-Tirmidhi 849]

This hadith demonstrates how greeting one another is integral to building a community based on compassion and peace in this life as well as the Hereafter. The Messenger of Allah *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* further observed:

"You shall not enter Paradise so long as you do not affirm belief and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I direct you to a thing, which if you do would foster love amongst you? Greet each other with Assalamu Alaikum"

[Related by Muslim 96]

So worthy and noble is this form of address, that it will be the manner in which Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* will greet those entering Paradise. In Paradise itself, the righteous

"will not hear any vain discourse but only salutations of peace (salaam) and they will have therein their sustenance morning and evening"

[Qur'an, 19:62]

Insha'Allah, let us all make a commitment to acknowledge the brothers and sisters we meet on the streets, on the library steps or in the classroom by unashamedly using the majestic greeting of Paradise: *Assalamu-Alaikum-Wa-Rahmatullahi-Wa-Barakatuhu.*

Yusra Ahmad
University of Toronto (St. George)
Faculty of Medicine

FLASHBACKS

Center Island Picnic

August 31st

It was Friday afternoon and I had come back from *juma* prayers when my sister Ayesha *(Ayesha Jawaid, MSA's General Secretary...FYI)* asked me if I wanted to come to her MSA picnic at Center Island the next day. I immediately said YES. So that night I got my nice pant and a shirt ready and got into bed (*Ohhh gotta look sharp, this brother's got style!*

It was finally the next day. On the way there, I asked my sister how we were going to get there? She said by a ferry.

We finally reached downtown and then we had to wait for my sister's friend Noor *(She's the sister's VP...FYI)*. We quickly got our tickets and stood in line and waited... and waited... and waited some more and finally we heard a big horn. It was the ferry and it took us to the island.

We got everything together and ran to the MSA site. When we arrived there were many bees so I started wacking them and then I stopped. After a while they went away. After 1 hour everybody else came and we played soccer and I even scored a goal! After that we played catch and tug-of-war *(the MSA's tug-of-war teams were having fun when they were challenged by a group of Vin Diesel look-alikes who were also on the island...well kind of.... but the MSA brothers were ready to take them on. Due to the strong bond between us brothers it took us only a few seconds to take them down & crown the MSA as the Centre Island Champs!! Wuhoo! Anyhow Humza,*

please continue....). Then one of my friends from soccer (*Farhan Noor... FYI)* and I started to BBQ the burgers & hotdogs. It was a lot of fun!!! We all ate, prayed and after that we all played some more *(even the sisters had their own soccer tournament going)*. Finally, before *Asr* prayer we had a scavenger hunt and my team won *(Congrats to the winning teams..... the 'Engineering Sisters' & 'For Shizzle')*. Sadly the day had to come to an end. On the way home I got sad because I might never see all my new MSA friends again *(NO WAY, we all loved meeting you & enjoyed your company. You are now, officially an honorary member of the MSA, so hope to see you around often :)*. I will never forget that day.

Jazak ALLAHU Khairan Humza, for sharing your MSA experience and to the MSA Events committee & volunteers for all their hard work to make the picnic a fun filled gathering.

Humza Jawaid, age 10
Grade 6, Freshwater Public School
(with comments from Farhan Asrar :)

MSA Frosh BBQ

September 12th

On the second Friday back to school, the annual MSA BBQ was held to welcome new students so they could get to know the MSA Execs and fellow Muslim students. Piping hot burgers and hot dogs were served out to a double cohort of eager young frosh ready to embark on the undergraduate adventure that is U of T St. George.

Sisters' Events coordinator Humairah Irfan commented, "It's great to see so many new students out. We will be planning lots of activities this year so there will be something for Muslims of all interests and backgrounds to get involved in. This way they will be able to shape the MSA of the future and make it their own. We highly encourage all Muslims on campus to get involved, and benefit from the strong, supportive network that the MSA provides."

As the crowd dispersed onto the sunny ISC lawn, new acquaintances were made and seeds of new friendships were planted. By the end of it all, frosh had discovered the many sisters and brothers who had surmounted the challenges they would now face and found with them a wealth of advice and knowledge. The nostalgia was evident as older students advised frosh to 'enjoy these years, they go by very fast! (even though it might seem like quite a way off right now)'.

We hope the frosh all enjoyed this event and used it as a springboard to get involved with MSA activities in the future. Remember, it's NEVER too late to get involved!

S. M. Ahmed Badruddin
University of Toronto

Cricket Tournaments

The MSA is organizing tournaments regularly this year. The first one took place on October 25th in UTM and was a great success *alhumdullillah*. Six teams participated in total: 4 from St. George campus and 2 from the UTM campus. In group 1, the Sophomores placed top by winning both of their matches while the UTM Eagles placed second by winning one match. In group 2, the First Years placed top by winning both matches while the Full Toss XI placed second by winning one match. The semi-finals took place between the Sophmores and the Full Toss XI, and the First Years and the UTM Eagles. Eventually, the UTM Eagles won the tournament and medals were presented to its players. The team's captain was Waqas and the MVP Trophy was awarded to Ali Muhammed, a player on the Sophomores team, for scoring most runs and taking most wickets in the tournament. Overall, the tournament was a HUGE success *alhumdullilah*. The hard work of the MSA Cricket Board, consisting of S. M. Ahmed Badruddin, Hunain Siddiqui, Saqib Hussain, Ali Muhammad and Hammad Siddiqui really paid off. However, if you missed it, MORE tournaments and matches are to come during the year *inshaAllah*, and we will also have teams from UTSC, York and Ryerson competing *inshaAllah*. If you would like more information, please send an email to msa_cricket@yahoo.com with your last name, first name and subject: MSA Cricket Board Update Sign Up.

S. M. Ahmed Badruddin
Cricket Coordinator - MSA

Marhaba Dinner
October 10th

The *annual Marhaba, or Welcome Back,* dinner on October 10th turned out to be a very successful dinner. The evening began with Qur'anic recitation and an introduction to this year's MSA exec. Mubashir Tahir, the MC for the evening, then led the audience into an exciting and interacting quiz. One of the many highlights of the evening was the captivating speech given by Hasrat Ghafur that touched many hearts in the room. The food was delicious: a mosaic of arabic favourites. Dinner was followed by another round of entertainment which included the performance of some *nasheeds* by Adnan Sirajuddin who quickly silenced the room with his captivating voice. A film was also presented by St. George's very own team of Waqqas Shafiq and Farhan Asrar. The film included a hilarious skit from a few MSA brothers (with some VERY thick West Indian accents!) and also introduced a slightly 'different' side of the MSA exec. Throughout the evening, brothers and sisters got a chance to meet new faces and many new bonds were forged. The night could not have gone better, *Allhamdulillah*.

Discover Islam
October 23rd

'Discover Islam' Lecture Series, Part One On Thursday October 23rd, the Outreach Committee held its first 'Discover Islam' lecture of the year, entitled 'Abraham, Moses and Jesus in the Islamic Tradition.' Nearly 200 people attended the lecture, at which Dr. Jamal Badawi described the role that these prophets *('alayhum assalaam)* played in the development of Islam, and compared the way in which they are presented in the Islamic tradition to that in the Judaic and Christian traditions. The lecture was well-planned, well-publicized and well-executed by the grace of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*. Preparation for the lecture was also a time for the numerous volunteers to discover their talents at planning and organizing. *Masha'Allah* the volunteers proved to be wonderful, committed individuals who comprised a fantastic team. *Takbir*!

Asma Ali
University of Toronto (St. George)

Charity CN Tower Climb!
October 24th

Over 1,700 steps. Nearly 145 stories. Though they sound like daunting numbers, 14 representatives from UofT St. George's MSA proudly surpassed those and the world's highest obstacle, indeed 'Conquering the Tower.' *Alhumdulilah*, on Friday October 24th Sarah Abbasi, Azim Ahmed, Sami Ahmed, Alia Alatassi, Luma Al-Jinabi, Abdullah Arain, Farhan Asrar, Noor Javed, Zeenat Malam, Mona Mozaffarian, Mahdi Tarabain, Bilal Sheikh, Faraz Siddiqui and Musheer Suffie all took part in the MSA Community Affairs CN Tower Climb in support of the United Way, and collectively managed to raise $710 *mashaAllah*, squashing the team goal many times over!

Not only was each climber able to reach the top in one piece, but the group made great time while doing it. Lead by Musheer Suffie and Faraz Siddiqui, who finished first and second, respectively, at approximately 16 minutes, the team attained its goal and maintained an average time of under 25 minutes! Meanwhile, TMV's own Zeenat Malam led all sister's, taking less than 24 minutes to reach the top of the world's tallest free standing structure.

However, do not let all this fool you; the brothers and sisters did not achieve this feat without breaking a sweat. "Are we there yet??" asked Sami Ahmed at repeated intervals of every 10 stories. Upon being notified that there were another 37 more stories to go at floor 107, TMV's own Asst. Editor Farhan Asrar remarked, "What … tell me you're joking?!" Apparently Farhan was under the impression that there were only 110 stories in total. But in the end, once the tower had been conquered and Team MSA had the opportunity to catch their breath, emotions of fulfillment and rejoice were expressed. "I had an amazing time – lets do it again next year!" exclaimed Zeenat Malam. It is also quite possible that the group of 14 broke some sort of record: praying *salah* at the highest recorded altitude, as *Maghrib* prayers were offered inside the observation deck some 553.33 meters off the ground (or 1,815, 5 inches).

Alhumdulilah, a great time was had by all in the name of this great cause. Perhaps next year, Team MSA will be even bigger and make yet more noise at Conquer the Tower Part II, *inshAllah*.

SINDIBAD RESTAURANT
Middle Eastern Cuisine
Grand Opening Special !
Falafel $1.99 Shwarma $2.99
Shish Kebob $2.99
2210 Dundas St. West
(Just south of Bloor)
416-538-2618
$1.00 off ANY purchase of
$10 or more with this cupon!

Sid's Ponds and Gardenscapes Inc.
Specializing in Pond Supplies and Landscaping Materials
905-824-5104
6000 9th Line
Mississauga ON
(Corner of Britannia Rd. and 9th Line)

From The News Desk...

"And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah, and be not divided..."
[Qur'an, 3:103]

The message in this succinct command from God is clear: it is a Muslim's duty to look after his/her fellow Muslims and thus strengthen the ties binding this beautiful *Ummah* to each other and to God. A glance through any media news outlet is enough to show that there are a plethora of Islamic issues making news across the globe. Many of our brothers and sisters are fighting tooth and nail to assert their identities and face enormous hurdles in the process. It seems the recent epidemic of Islamo-phobia in the media has given a whole new significance to the Muslim label. As part of a regular effort, *InshaAllah*, The Muslim Voice will shine the spotlight on recent Muslim issues in the news, to raise awareness, and to keep ourselves aware of the big picture. So sit back, fasten your seatbelt, and prepare for a quick tour around the Muslim world!

1. Peace Process in Shambles

With the erection of a physical wall on the West Bank, the wall of misunderstanding and hatred that separates Israelis and Palestinians seems to grow higher. In the ongoing standoff over disputed territory, the 'security barrier' was constructed to protect Jewish settlers. Instead, it has served to step on the toes of Arab leaders who see the wall not only as a violation of their land, but as asking for trouble. Canadian Foreign Minister Bill Graham joined the representatives of the Arab League in condemning the wall: "We believe the construction of the wall... is both unwise and not the right thing to do," he said earlier this month.

The wall is the latest in the escalating episodes in the region, each upping the ante on retaliatory action and putting another blot on the well-intentioned 'road map' for peace concocted by George W. Bush in March, 2003. Pressure is growing on Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to "remove" Arafat as an obstacle to peace while random attacks on suspected terrorist ringleaders serve to ignite the embers of Palestinian uprising. On the other hand, suicide bombing by Palestinian organizations, such as the October 4 killing of 19 people and wounding of 55 others in Haifa, only make matters worse. In a U.S.-supported act of "self-defense," Israel bombed an alleged Islamic Jihad base in neighboring Syria. This act in return is provoking an outcry from Syria and other Arab leaders, who denounce Israel's "organized state terrorism."

We, as Canadian Muslims, can pray for the healing of this battle-scarred region, while also putting pressure on our leaders to step in. Where has Bush Jr. disappeared after all his great expectations for peace? And why is an Israeli raid on an abandoned camp in Syria acceptable as "self-defense" while Palestinian protest against a 600 km wall disrupting their daily lives not? Why as the planned assassination of Arafat received so little outrage from other nations? This is not to say that violence against innocents or suicide in the name of Islam is acceptable. It's nothing short of tragic to hear about young men and women strapping bombs on themselves and dying in hope of becoming martyrs.

When will the madness end?

2. Iraqi Quagmire

It is not surprising that the fallout after a war muddled with rhetoric and unfounded claims, remains unclear. Was it all about oil? Are the Iraqi people really better off? Will the hegemonic behavior of the U.S. permanently invalidate the United Nations' authority? And most importantly, what lies in Iraq's future? The 'war' has created more questions than it has solved.

A recent Gallup poll states that two-thirds of citizens in Baghdad believe they are better off under U.S. complacency than Saddam's dictatorship. Yet Iraqi resistance against U.S. occupation seems to be mounting. On October 1 alone, three U.S. soldiers were killed in separate attacks, bringing the number of post-war U.S. casualties to 90. Coalition forces have been warned about increasingly sophisticated attacks by organized militants.

In the meantime, Bush is having a hard time getting support for his plan to rebuild Iraq. His newest draft resolution didn't impress the U.N. or the leaders of about two dozen independent Arab states comprising the Arab League. Criticism of the plan included: no overarching timeline, U.S. holding the strings while other countries provide logistics, and heavily supervised constitution-making and elections. The French U.N. ambassador dismissed the proposed text as insufficient, adding that it "leaves the United Nations in a secondary role." (Freedom fries, anyone?) Other countries, such as Russia and Pakistan, stepped up to the podium to voice their concerns, while Turkey became the first and only predominantly Muslim country to offer support.

At this fragile time in Iraq's re-construction, it is vital for the international community to closely monitor the situation in Iraq. Rival religious personalities are vying for the spots in Bush's hand-picked interim administration. Cultural and religious sensibilities should be considered so that Iraq doesn't become another post-colonial landmine.

Maybe we couldn't stop it, but becoming taciturn or casting an indifferent eye on the aftermath only undermines our sincerity for this cause.

3. Musharraf Schmoozes in North America

Is Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf a gun-wielding dictator or a long-awaited voice of reason in his volatile country? It seems the grass is greener only on the other side for Musharraf, as both Washington and Ottawa welcomed him during a recent visit, while resentment of his hypocrisy seethed back home.

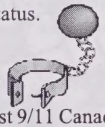
Coming to power in a military coup in 1999, Musharraf was perceived as an illegitimate and self-serving politician – until September 11. Almost immediately afterward, Musharraf was pledging his support for the 'War against Terrorism' (although one wonders if there was actually

any choice in the matter). This move established him as a key international player and ally of the U.S., while causing an uproar among Pakistanis who scorned Musharraf's perceived treachery in siding with the Big Bad West.

If Musharraf is a shrewd politician, he's doing a very good job of it. He vehemently denies substituting the government with his military officials and always presents a poised and confident image during interviews and photo-ops. It's hard not to admire his climb to the top of the bureaucratic ladder in so short a time. Machiavelli would be proud.

Beyond the politics, Pakistan is on shaky grounds. It successfully test-fired a short-range missile as part of a series of tests for "technical needs." Although the missile itself isn't a serious threat, any sign of muscle-flexing in Pakistan or neighboring India is dangerous because both antagonists maintain nuclear arms. There is always the ominous possibility of a Cold-War type arms race if any one country imposes on the other. It is feared the disputed territory of Kashmir might serve as the catalyst for such a disaster.

What's more, religious clashes between the majority *Sunni* Muslims and the *Shiites* is escalating. In early October, sectarian violence claimed about a dozen lives, including that of a *Sunni* Muslim politician. Violence in the name of Islam is in itself a misnomer. It's sad that Pakistan is so fettered with internal bickering that it can't focus on the larger problems keeping the nation from first-world status.



4. Muslims and Borders

... equals trouble. Post 9/11 Canada is caught between a rock and a hard place in its attempt to uphold the rights of its Muslims citizens while appeasing U.S. paranoia about terrorism.

The federal immigration department's 'Project Thread' terror probe, started mid-August, detained 21 Pakistani men recently landing in Canada. Most were students suspected of using false visas. Another Muslim pilot was alleged to have been recruited by Al-Qaeda in a terror plot; the rest were similarly thought to have terrorist links. After investigation, nearly all of the men have been cleared of charges, said a lawyer involved with the probe.

Maher Arar wasn't so lucky. The Canadian citizen arrived back home to his wife and two children on October 6 after being shipped from country to country and finally ending up in a Syrian prison for a year while awaiting an investigation into his 'terrorist links.' The charges have never materialized.

Arar has become a focal point in the issue of Canadian Muslims' safety while flying overseas. His ordeal began when he was detained at a New York airport on his way home after vacation and denied the right to be tried in Canada or contact his family. Then he was sent to Jordan for several days in a deliberate step many suspect was meant to interrogate him at a place where constitutional niceties aren't necessary. There is strong evidence of torture.

Arar's wife and the Canadian Muslim community is demanding answers and compensation for Arar's trauma. In the meantime, Arar is ducking cameras to get re-acquainted with his wife and kids, who he says "grew up in the past year."

In my opinion, the fact that we have only started hearing about Arar in the media is cause for concern. Could it be that media moguls are selective about which citizens receive full Canadian support and protection? Or could it be that Arar's faith and the (mere) question of his terrorist link had made us unsympathetic to his suffering? The outrage and swift Canadian intervention in the murder of Canadian photojournalist, Laura Kazemi, in Iran presents an exercise in contrast.

Furthermore, Solicitor-General Wayne Easter's curt reply that he "will not agree to an inquiry" is damaging. A spokesman for the U.S. State Department in Washington dodged questions saying he was not aware of Mr. Arar's release. Arar's wife has been raising awareness about her family's plight and urging action on the part of Ottawa for more than a year. When she invited MPs to a candlelight vigil for her husband on Parliament Hill, one office curtly responded, "Get a life."

Enough said. 'Innocent until proven guilty' is a maxim that shouldn't discriminate.

5. The Right to Wear *Hijab*

A 16-year-old private school student in Montreal was expelled after she refused to remove her *hijab*. Currently in her final year of high school, Irene Waseem was told her head-covering violates the school dress code. The Quebec Human Rights Commission has launched an investigation into the issue.

Similarly, a Muslim teacher in Germany was barred from teaching because of her *hijab*. According to strict German laws on religious neutrality, the religious symbol was deemed inappropriate. Last month, Germany's top court withdrew the ban and allowed Fereshta Ludin to teach again. The Central Council of Muslims in Germany welcomed the ruling, adding that it paves the way for more Muslim women to work and be independent.

By the Grace of God, we as Canadian students do not think twice about wearing our *hijab*. We don't always hear about cases where women do not have this right but when we do, we are dismayed and baffled. Currently, France is considering whether it should prohibit the *hijab* from school and Turkey does not allow *hijabis* to attend university. I pray God help out sisters across the world who are denied this most fundamental right.

6. The Trouble with Manji

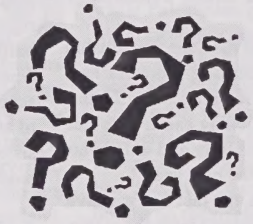
Many of you may have heard of the clamor over Irshad Manji's new book entitled, 'The Trouble with Islam: A Wake-up Call for Honesty and Change.' Even before the book's recent release, reviews were buzzing about the "Muslim refusenik" and her courageous stance; she was hailed the next Salman Rushdie, installed bullet-proof windows in her house, and is always accompanied with an intimidatingly muscular 'friend.' It seemed a bit presumptuous for Manji to attach such heavy moral reverberations to her partly autobiographical book. But it would have been forgivable if her book lived up to its controversial expectations – it doesn't.

In his thorough review, Riad Saloojee, Executive Editor of CAIR-CAN, explains why Manji discredits her own arguments and leaves no intellectual shortcut untrodden in her mission to make Islam appear as an anti-Semitic religion which oppressed its women and supports slavery. Manji puts the nail in the coffin: "I know I'm oversimplifying, but over-simplification runs rampant in the development of God-awful laws," she justified. But subjectivity and selective referencing isn't very convincing, Irshad.

Nuzhat Khurshid, University of Toronto
2nd year, Humanities

3 Nervous Sopha... (omores) Plus 1 Hip Frosh

Assalaamu Alaikum wa rahmatulahi wa barakatahu! Nakiwalla here, wishing you and your family a blessed Month of Ramadan! As you can imagine, every day of this wonderful month is filled with non-stop fun and *halal* excitement, such as: reciting the entire Qur'an in 20 *rakaats* of *Taraweh*, getting up early every morning to praise the sublime Creator in 12 *rakats* of fun filled *Tahajjud*, and of course, helping our dear mother prepare *Iftaar* in the kitchen each evening. Even our new friend Raheem, who used to be more jiggy with it then a bowl of gelatin free Jello, is now busily grooming away at his handsome new training beard! So as you can see, we are immersed in the blessings of this month and will not be able to have an adventure at this time. But fear not! We'll be back and badder (in a good way) then ever in the next issue of TMV! But to keep our brothers and sisters busy in this blessed month, we have designed a contest for all you budding students of Islamic knowledge!



Can you guess our favorite *Surah*? Oh, I know what you are thinking! **ALL** the *surah*'s in the Qur'an are a blessing from Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, and are equally joyous and exciting to read! I agree with this 199%! But if you can guess THE *surah* we enjoy reciting every morning before we start our Islam fulfilled days, email muslimvoice@yahoo.com with the name of the *surah* and in one sentence, the reason you think it is our favorite. Winners and selected responses will be published in the next TMV. So have a jiving good Ramadan (as Raheem would say), say your prayers, eat your vitamins and if I can quote the Qur'an:

Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists). He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). [Qur'an, 96:1-2]

Enjoy the Qur'an and the holy month of Ramadan!
Your Brother in Islam and eternal servant of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*,
Nakiwalla

Ayesha Sharieff, University of Toronto (Erindale)
Fatima Butt, University of Toronto (St. George)

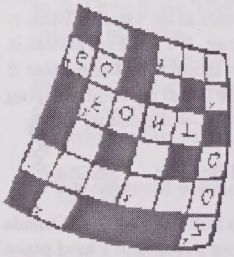
ARE YOU MUSLIM?
AND A UNIVERSITY STUDENT?

Researchers in the Psychology Department (University of Toronto) need participants for a study on the incidence of depressive-like symptoms in Muslims, and its potential correlation with factors such as level of acculturation, locus of control and religious/cultural traditionalism.

The study consists of completing 6 questionnaires (approx. 30 mins). These may be administered by a researcher at an agreed upon location, or may be completed by mail.

If you are interested in learning more about this study, please contact Yasmin at: 416-305-9662 or at yasmin.asvat@utoronto.ca

SOLUTIONS to Crossword from pg 28:



ACROSS:

1. Elephant
5. Sixty-three
8. Ali
10. Abdul Mutalib
11. Forty
13. Makkah
14. Wife
16. Hira
18. Abu Bakir

DOWN:

2. Abu Talib
3. Abdullah
4. Fifty-three
6. Khadijah
7. Madinah
9. Mother
12. Two
15. Four
17. Six

The Blessed Month of Ramadan

"O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqun." [Qur'an, 2:183]

Time and time again, Almighty Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* has sent Prophets and Divine Scriptures with them to reveal two paths for mankind to choose with free will – one heading to eternal happiness in Paradise and the other leading to eternal misery in Hell-fire. The Noble Qur'an is the Revelation and the Final Divine Guidance for humanity from the Glorious Creator. Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* has clearly mentioned in *Surah Al-Baqarah* of the Holy Qur'an that of the many benefits of fasting, *Taqwa* (consciousness of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*) translated as piety, is of utmost importance. It is essential to have *Taqwa* as it will help to stay away from unlawful actions, and therefore, the performance of good deeds will increase.

Islam means peace. It means submission to the One and Only Creator, Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, and to live in tranquility within one's self, with other people, and with the environment. The five pillars – essential religious obligations – of Islam strengthen and create a framework for the life of a Muslim. A Muslim is any person whose obedience and loyalty are to the Lord of the Universe. One of the five pillars of Islam is to fast in the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, Ramadan. In Arabic, fasting is referred to as *saum* or *sawm* meaning "to refrain" or "to abstain from something." So, in Islamic terms, fasting is to refrain from food, drink, and sexual activity from dawn to sunset. Muslims fast daily from the first light of dawn to sunset as part of an effort towards self-purification and betterment. Ramadan is important to Muslims. It is the month in which the first verses of the Holy Qur'an (the Divine Scripture) were revealed by the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth to Prophet Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)*.

"The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong)." [Qur'an, 2:184]

FASTING HAS A NUMBER OF BENEFITS:

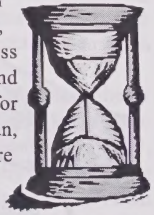
1. It guides one to gain a sense of self-control and will-power, which can be helpful in dealing with temptations and peer-pressure throughout life. For example, it is important not to just abstain from eating and drinking, but also to avoid any inappropriate behaviour that can jeopardize the rewards of fasting. The consequences of committing sins are so great, like fasts not being accepted by Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*. *Taqwa* helps one to achieve calmness and to stay away from sins that destroy good deeds, such as backbiting (*gheebah*), slander (*buhtaan*), spreading rumours, lying, joking with false statements, gossiping, jealousy, envy, etc. Indeed, Ramadan is a month of patience and tolerance. Abu Hurairah (*radi'Allahu 'anhu*) narrated that Prophet Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said:

"If one does not abandon falsehood in words and deeds (during the period of fasting), Allah has no need for his abandoning of his food and drink (i.e. Allah will not accept his fasting)." [Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

2. It helps to purify body as well as soul by building a greater sense of spirituality and community. For instance, engaging in worship or "*ibaadah*" is one of the biggest rewards in the month of Ramadan as it helps to develop peace of mind and countless good deeds. It is *sunnah* to apply extra efforts at reading, studying, and reciting the Holy Qur'an in the month of Ramadan. Furthermore, it is very important to perform *fardh* (obligatory) *salah* and return any *quadha salah* (missed *salah*) as soon as possible. Also, *nafl salah*, *dhikr* (*zikr*), *tasbeeh*, reading *ahadith*, *taraweeh*, *i'tikaf*, and any other form of worship are vital at this time of the year as the rewards as well as blessings in Ramadan are more than anytime of the year. Refraining from sins is a form of worship as well. However, be aware that worship is not rewarded if one who is engaged in *ibaadah* commits sin(s) at the same time. *Taqwa* aids one to worship with a good intention of receiving unimaginable rewards only from Almighty Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* as He has promised, and so refraining from evil deeds becomes easier.

3. One obtains greater satisfaction for what one has from the feeling of hunger and thirst. For example, by experiencing hunger and thirst one realizes the importance of giving and sharing food and wealth with the less fortunate. One gives charity (*sadaqah*) to the needy and the poor with honesty and good intention. Moral and admirable qualities like sympathy and generosity increase in the month of Ramadan. Respect for one another becomes stronger at this time as well. *Taqwa* leads one to become closer to the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful by repenting for sins, being thankful, helping and forgiving others. By all means, the blessed month of Ramadan is a season of giving and sharing.

The bliss of the Holy month of Ramadan ... the Gates of Paradise will open wide and the Doors of Hell-fire will close shut. Meanwhile, the achievement of rewards will increase as the Satan will be chained. The month of Ramadan is a month beyond fasting. It is a month of developing *taqwa*, patience, and tolerance. It is a month of happiness and self-purification. It is a month of giving and sharing. Ramadan is also a month of repenting for sins, generosity and being thankful. In Ramadan, the seconds, minutes, hours, days, and nights are better than the rest of the year.



Fasting is not made difficult. One who is traveling or ill is allowed to fast on another day. Fasting is made beneficial to mankind. It is good for one's health and develops good character. By fasting one receives inconceivable rewards in this world and in the Hereafter from the Most Merciful. No one knows the weight of the rewards one will earn, except for Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* the All-Knowing and the All-Wise. The better the efforts of the good deeds the greater the rewards. Truly, this shows the boundless mercy of the Gracious and Almighty Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*.

continued on page 12...

... 'Blessed' continued from pg 11

Abu Hurairah (*radi'Allahu 'anhu*) related that Prophet Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said:

"Allah (Subhana Wa Ta'ala) said, 'All the deeds of Adam's sons (people) are for them, except fasting which is for Me, and I will give the reward for it.' " [Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

The last ten days of Ramadan hold importance and a special time for devotion to good deeds. It was *Lailat Al-Qadr* or the Night of Power on which the Holy Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)*. *Lailat al-Qadr* occurs on an odd-numbered night during the last ten days of Ramadan. The Noble Qur'an states that *Lailat al-Qadr*

"...is better than a thousand months" [Qur'an, 97:3]

making it the best night of the year. It is best to spend the night in worship. The rewards and the blessings of this honorable night are countless.

Worship does not only mean praying or fasting; but even the slightest action we perform to please Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* is our submission to the Merciful Creator. All in all, the month of Ramadan helps the believing servant of Almighty Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* to become a better person, not just once a year, but year-round. The practices learned from refraining from lawful/permissible actions (food, drink, and sexual activity) in the month of Ramadan help to train an individual to avoid unlawful things, which have been permanently forbidden by the Glorious Creator, for the rest of the year.

May Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* bless us, grant us piety to please Him in the best of manners, and shower us with His rewards in this world and in the Hereafter. *Ameen.*

Abu Hurairah (*radi'Allahu 'anhu*) narrated that Prophet Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said:

"There are two occasions of joy for one who fasts: one when he breaks the fast and the other when he will meet his Lord."

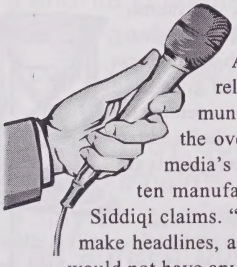
[Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Anna Ahmad, University of Toronto (St. George)
1st Year, Faculty of Arts and Science

Be on the Scene and Be Proactive

In their endeavour to develop a strong Muslim community in North America, Muslims have continuously underestimated the power of media in shaping the public opinion, according to a public relations professor and media ethicist, Ahamdullah Siddiqi. Dr. Ahamdullah Siddiqi, a professor at Western Illinois University, shared his expertise with the Toronto based Muslim students during a day long seminar at University of Toronto at Mississauga, entitled "Mass Communication: History, Theory and Practice", organized by Understanding Islamic Academy on October 4, 2003.

"Perhaps the best and basic definition of communication that I found is by a scholar, Harold Lasswell: Who says what to whom in which channel and with what effect?" said Siddiqi. While elaborating on the nature and evolution of mass communication, he offered a critical look at its effects on the economic, political, and social trends in North America. "The sole purpose of the contemporary media is to sell. News is sold to the people, and people are sold to the ads," Siddiqi told the audience.



After analyzing the theories behind this relatively recent social science, mass communication, one shouldn't be surprised by the overwhelming lack of objectivity in the media's coverage of Islam today. "News is often manufactured and events are dramatized," Siddiqi claims. "As long as the story is hot enough to make headlines, a majority of the news reporters today would not have any qualms about reporting a story without first verifying the source", Dr. Siddiqi asserted, based on his interactions with the media practionors as media ethicist.

Being a life member of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), Siddiqi has presented his academic papers in over 25 countries around the world. Ahmadullah Siddiqi is a physicist-turned-media expert. In the mid 70's, while pursuing his PhD in physics in India, Siddiqi took a dramatic turn in his academic career. He realized that if all Muslims do is complain about the negative portrayal of Islam in the media, they will not be able to get anywhere as far as their voice in the media is concerned; since then he began pursuing his training in media.

Dr. Siddiqi listed three components of Islamic media ethics that are lacking in the mainstream media: First, Islamic media should be based on the concept that we are all created by One God, the implication of which is that no human being should be discriminated against; second, social responsibility, involving relaying only what is objective and beneficial, and discouraging the social evils; third, the concept of one nation *(ummah)* as Muslims upholding the cause of peace and social justice, wherever possible.

Responding to the question whether he considers Al-Jazeera to be a good alternate Islamic news source, Dr. Siddiqi said, "If Al-Jazeera is able to do as good a job as the Fox News, if not better, in manipulating the news according to their nationalistic agenda, rooted in political confrontation, then certainly it is an 'alternate' source of news."

"However, Al-Jazera certainly cannot be termed an 'Islamic media', simply because it doesn't match the high standards of objectivity required for reporting according to the Islamic ethics," Siddiqi continued. "Media and Mass Communication are applied social sciences that require time, environment, human resources, and financial investment to develop," Siddiqi passionately argued, encouraging Muslim students to proactively engage in a mutually beneficial relationship with the media.

This seminar was perhaps a highlight of an in-depth discourse and research that Dr. Ahmadullah Siddiqi provides in his recent book Islam, Muslims, and the Media.

Taha Ghayyur, University of Toronto Alumnus

The Objectives of Fasting

The Obligation of Fasting

Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, Exalted is He, says:

"O you who have faith! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you – so that hopefully you will have taqwa." [Qur'an, 2:183]

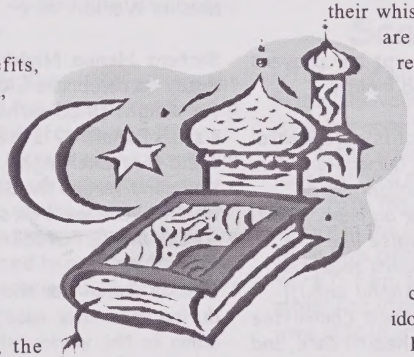
This means that hopefully you can safeguard yourselves from the fire through fasting; fasting is a means to the forgiveness of sins, and sins lead one to the fire.

The Prophet *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said,

"Islam is built upon five: that you worship Allah and reject the worship of anything else, to establish the prayer, the giving of zakat, performing pilgrimage to the House and fasting the month of Ramadan." [Narrated by Muslim]

The Virtues of Fasting

Fasting carries with it a number of benefits, amongst which are: the elevation of one's rank, the expiation of sins, the breaking of one's desires and lusts, the increase of charity, the multiplication of actions of obedience to Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, giving thanks to the One who knows the hidden matters, and preventing oneself from even contemplating committing a sin.



The Elevation of Rank

With regards to the elevation of rank, the Messenger of Allah *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said,

"When Ramadan comes, the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hellfire are locked and the devils are chained." [Narrated by Bukhari]

He *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said, relating from His Lord, Mighty and Magnificent,

"All of the actions of the son of Adam are for him except the fast for that is for Me and I will reward it. Fasting is a protecting shield, so when it is the day when one of you are fasting, let him not behave or speak indecently; if someone tries to abuse or fight him, let him say, 'I am fasting'. By the One in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, the smell emanating from the mouth of the one fasting is better with Allah then the smell of musk. The one fasting has two times of joy, when he breaks his fast he is happy and when He meets his Lord he will rejoice at his fasting." [Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim]

He *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* also said,

"Every action that the son of Adam does, [its reward] will be multiplied, a good deed will be increased tenfold up to seven-hundred fold. Allah, Mighty and Magnificent, says, 'except for the fast, for that is for Me and I will reward it for he left his desires and food for My sake.'" [Narrated by Muslim]

He *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said,

"In paradise there is a gate which is called ar-Rayyan through which the people who fasted will enter on the Day of Judgment, and no one else shall enter alongside them. It will be asked, 'where are those who fasted?' and they will walk through it, and upon the entry of the last of them, it will be locked, and no one else will walk through it."

[Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim]

He *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said,

"When people eat in the presence of a fasting person, the Angels invoke blessings upon him until they finish."

[Narrated by Ahmad and at-Tirmidhi]

With regards to 'opening of the gates of Paradise', this is a phrase that points to the increase of actions of obedience that in turn lead to the opening of the gates of Paradise. 'Locking the gates of the Fire' is a phrase that points to the decrease, and lack therewith, of sins which in turn leads to the locking of the gates of the Fire. 'The chaining of the devils' is a phrase that points to the termination of their whisperings, and temptations, to those who are fasting because they give up hope of receiving a favourable response.

His saying, 'All of the actions of the son of Adam are for him except the fast for that is for Me and I will reward it,' fasting has been specifically adjoined to Him in order to honour it because the hidden nature of fasting prevents ostentation entering it. Moreover, hunger and thirst are not used as means to draw closer to any king of this world nor any idol.

His saying, "And I will reward it," even though He rewards all actions of obedience, this phrase points to the greatness of the reward of fasting.

His saying, "Fasting is a protecting shield" means that fasting serves as a barrier erected between the person and the punishment of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*.

His saying, " let him say, 'I am fasting,' " means let him remind himself that he is fasting so that this would serve to prevent him from repaying like with like.

As for the two times of joy, the first is because the one fasting has been granted the divine accord to complete this act of worship and the second is because of the reward he will attain when Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* rewards him.

His saying, "He left his desires and food for My sake" shows that he chose the obedience of his Lord over the obedience of the call of his soul. Whoever chooses Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* chooses him. This is why when someone desires to commit a sin, then leaves committing it for fear of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, He says to the recording Angels, 'Record it as a good deed, for he only left giving in to his lusts for My sake.' Furthermore, the greatness of fasting and its unique character allows entry to Paradise through the gate of *ar-Rayyan*.

With regards to the Angels invoking blessings upon the one fasting, in whose presence food is eaten, this is because on such an occasion he has to exert himself more in fighting his desire to eat. Through them invoking blessings upon him they are asking for his forgiveness and mercy to be bestowed upon him.

continued on page 16...

UTSG Fall Frenzy

Ramadan *Iftars*- *Allhamdulillah*, this year we have truly been blessed to have DAILY (yup, you heard right!) *iftars* on campus. Yummy food and great company make having a late class in Ramadan completely worth it. And the best thing is... they're FREE! May Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* bless all the generous sponsors for their time and efforts.
Time: 4:30pm to 6:30pm
Location:
Mondays/Tuesdays/Thursdays - ISC, Baldwin Room
Wednesdays - Koffler Students Services Centre, 2nd floor (Student Affairs lounge)
Friday - Bahen Centre, Megabites Cafeteria (Use the South entrance to Bahen)

Nightly *Tarawih*- ON CAMPUS!!!
Time: Monday to Friday, 7:30
Location: ISC, 3rd floor
May Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* accept our prayers and good deeds during this blessed month!

Orphan Sponsorship- This project is a wonderful opportunity for you to be generous during Ramadan. The Prophet *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said:

"I and the person who looks after an orphan and provides for him, will be in Paradise like this," putting his index and middle fingers together.
[Narrated Sahl bin Sa'd (*radi'Allahu 'anhu*)]

Help the Students for World Justice Committee raise money to provide education, health care, and basic necessities to needy Muslim children all around the world. Help us sponsor a child each day - only $60 per contribution. Donations will be collected after *salaat-al-Juma'a* and during *Iftars*.

Ramadan Food Drive- *InshaAllah* boxes will be set up at various buildings across campus (ISC, Sid Smith, Victoria College, Robarts, Koffler & Med Sci), where you can drop off a non-perishable food item. We will also have boxes and volunteers after *Jummah* prayers where you can drop off the food or make a donation. Come help us reach our goal of 1,200 items this Ramadan as we compete with the likes of York and UTM!

Ramadan Toy and Clothing Drive- Have any clothes that you've outgrown or just don't need anymore? Or toys & and stuffed animals from your childhood that are just taking up space? Good news: We can help! Come and drop off your clothing or toys at boxes located at ISC, Robarts & Med Sci (next to our food boxes). Collections will be donated to the Muslim Welfare Centre. For more information or volunteer opportunities contact Br. Shuaib at shuaib16@hotmail.com or Sr. Rabia at lavender109@hotmail.com Keep posted for more details in the coming days!

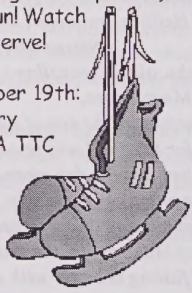
Chechnya lecture and film screening- Our sisters and brothers in Chechnya have their rights violated each day. In order to help us gain an understanding about the situation there, Student's for World Justice is holding a lecture and film screening concerning history and current injustices committed in Chechnya. See you on November 18th (time and location to follow shortly *InshaAllah*).

Andalusia (Muslim Spain)- Student's for World Justice is holding a lecture series this Ramadan to help us all learn lessons from Spanish Muslim history. Educate yourself on how to relate our history to the current struggle for justice in the Muslim World.

Sisterz Henna Night & Gift Exchange- Are you ready to celebrate Eid in style? Are you geared up for a night filled with fun & frolic where JUST the sisters PaAaRtY? It's all at the Sisterz Henna Night & Eid Gift Exchange!!!...
And don't forget the **Sisterz Day Out** during boxing week, where we'll go shopping, ice-skating, eat out & have MORE FUN!!!!!

Winter Camp- For the lucky sisters who stick around during the winter vacation, there is a sisters Winter Camp in the works (shhhh! We can't say more... if anyone leaving for the holidays gets to hear this they'll DEFINETLY want to change their plans!!!) Don't miss out on all the sisters fun! Watch out for details on the MSA listserve!

Brothers Ice Skating- December 19th: Just as it snows in Toronto every winter, the brothers at the MSA TTC their way to Nathan Phillips Square for ice skating. This year, too, *inshaAllah* we will have brothers going down there! Keep in mind that you must rent your skates at the venue if you don't have a pair. Please keep posted on email.



Academic Affairs- The academic affairs mandate is to assist our members in their career goals. We plan to organise seminars on how to balance your academic and volunteer work, how to manage time and priorities and how to live on a budget along with a mentorship program and an initiative to collect course notes, past papers and swapping of used books. If you wish to volunteer in any work of this committee, please contact: academic_utsg@yahoogroups.com

UPCOMING

EVENTS

Erindale MaSalA

Note: this column contains real events held by the Erindale MSA some of which have been enhanced with fictional details. Check out our web site (www.uoftmsa.com) for the precise dates for these and more events

Ramadan *Iftars*- YIPPPIIIEEEEE! The blessed month of Ramadan is upon us, which means its time to get down and get Islamic with the MSA! Get your pre-*tarawih* boost with our yummy *iftars* held in the Presentation Room of the Students Center. Check out our web site for the *iftar* schedule and information on donating your time and resources to help make these *iftars* a success! We will have *magrib* prayers, *iftar*, and yes, 20 *rakaats* of hype *tarawih*! Remember, Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala)* keenly listens to the prayers of his fasting servants...and exams are just around the corner.

Sister's Tea—-No, you are not too old for a tea party! Enjoy a splendid afternoon with your fellow sisters over a warm cup of tea and delicious biscuits. (Note: please bring your own cups and saucers). Brothers are welcomed to arrange their own tea party at a separate location if they feel left out.

Professional Program Info session-For all those budding doctors, lawyers, and professional Popeyes chicken food tasters, our info session has answers to the admissions questions you seek. Professionals from various fields will make presentations and be available for your questions.

Exam Prep. Seminar-It's everyone's favorite time of year, exam time will soon be upon us, which means the MSA is working hard to make sure you're at the right end of the bell curve! Senior students skilled in the art of exam prep will conduct our session. Topics include: cramming for your dear life, mind clearing techniques and the mysteries of the arubix cube, smart alec answers to questions you will never be smart enough to answer anyway, recognizing answer patterns on multiple choice scantrons, how to psyche out the other students in a killer exam by looking annoyingly confident, and of course study *duas*!!!!!!

WWF Sponsorship-The MSA is raising funds to sponsor the care of a polar bear through the World Wildlife Fund. If successful, the MSA will adopt a camel for rides between the North and South Building! Riders will be charged 50 cents/minute to help fund MSA events. MSA members will receive a generous discount of 1 cent a minute!! The MSA believes this venture has great profit potential since the 5 minute path really takes more than 5 minutes! Note: this service should not be used for events that actually require you to be on time e.g. tests or any other events that will make us receive mean phone calls from your parents. But remember, if we can't adopt the polar bears, no camels for anyone! Donations for the polar bear adoption can be made at the MSA office. Wishing you and your family a blessed Ramadan and reminding you that *dua* ends in an A! Good luck on your exams!

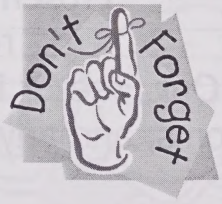
Ayesha Sharieff and Sameem Hafeez
University of Toronto (Erindale)

Scarborough Scoop

UTSC MSA will be holding its first annual Eid Dinner, Friday, November 28, 2003. At the time that this issue has gone to press, details have not been worked out with regards to who's speaking, but it will be *insha Allah* a memorable event! Come join us as we celebrate the coming of Eid. This event is open to anyone in the GTA, and tickets will be made available to all five campuses (Ryerson, UTM, UTSC, UTSG, York). For more information, e-mail us at: msa@utsc.utoronto.ca or visit our website at http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~msa .

SIGN-UP FOR MSA-L!

Would you like to know about MSA events?
Want to know when & where Jumu'ah might be held on campus?
Don't want to miss important announcements?



Visit our website at www.utoronto.ca/muslim for details on how to sign-up for the MSA e-mail listserve!

... *'Objectives' continued from pg 13*

The Expiation of Sins

With regards to the expiation of sins, the Messenger of Allah *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said,

"One Ramadan to the next serves as expiation for what is done between them, so long as the major sins are avoided."

[Narrated by Muslim]

He *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* also said,

"Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan, out of faith and expectant of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven him."

[Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim]

The Breaking of One's Desires and Lusts

Hunger and thirst break the desire to commit sin and it is reported that the Prophet *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said,

"O gathering of youth! Whoever can afford it, let him marry for this is better in aiding one to lower his gaze and preserving the private parts. Whoever is not able, let him fast for this will diminish his desire." [Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim]

Increase of Charity

When the one fasting feels the pangs of hunger, he takes this as a reminder to feed others who are hungry, 'for the only one who feels compassion towards the lovers is one who has loved.' It has been reported that Sulayman (*'alayhum assalaam*) would not eat until all his dependants had first eaten and when asked why this was so, he said, 'I fear that I would become full and so forget the hungry.'

Increase Actions of Obedience

The one fasting will be reminded of the hunger and thirst that the denizens of Hell will experience and this will encourage him to obey Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* so as to be saved from that fate.

Giving Thanks to the One Who Knows the Hidden Matters

The one fasting comes to truly appreciate the favours of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, it is only through knowing hunger and thirst that one truly appreciates satiation and the quenching of that thirst; it is only when blessings are absent that one appreciates them more.

Preventing Oneself from Contemplating Sin

When one is full, the soul craves sin and looks longingly at all sorts of transgression, but when one is hungry, the soul craves food and drink, and this is the better of the two without doubt. It is for this reason that one of the *Salaf* thought fasting to be the best of all actions of worship and when asked why he replied, 'That Allah look to me in a state where my soul is fighting me for food and drink is more beloved to me than Allah looking at me in a state where my soul is full and fighting me for sin.'

Fasting has many more benefits, such as refining the mind and strengthening the body. It is mentioned in a *hadith*,

"Fast for you will become healthy."

[Narrated by at-Tabarani]

The greatness of fasting is further extended to the one who causes a fasting person to open fast for he has the same reward as the one who fasted. The Prophet *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* said,

"Whoever provides food for a person to open the fast, he will have the likes of his reward, without the reward of the fasting person decreasing in the slightest."

[Narrated by Ahmad and at-Tirmidhi]

So whoever provides food for thirty six fasting people in one year, it will be as if he fasted for the whole year. And whoever provides food for many fasting people with this intention, Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* will record for him the fasting of many years because a good deed is multiplied ten-fold.

Modified from <u>*The Objectives of Fasting (Maqasid as-Sawm)*</u>
by Shaykh al-'Izz ibn 'Abdis-Salam
Translated by Abu Rumaysah

Alima's Roti and Pastry Takeout

FAMOUS FOR DHALPURIS AND PARATHAS

Try our convenient new

Freezer Packs

Frozen rotis individually sealed and packed in resealable clear plastic containers.

Our Freezer Packs are great for students, travellers, busy moms, and anyone who needs hearty, great –tasting rotis in a form that's

easy to store *and* easy to serve

We're located at
13 Kenview Blvd. Unit 49, Brampton (Near Goreway and Steeles)
905-791-ROTI (7684)

The Canadian Islamic Congress

Open * Trusted * Canadian

The Canadian Islamic Congress is a national organization committed to serve and empower Canada's Muslims by conducting research, monitoring the media, awareness campaigns and policy development on Canada's relations with Muslim countries, social justice in Canada and world peace with justice, that is a consensus of Canadian Muslims' views on issues that affect us all.

Sign up for the CIC Friday Bulletin now!!!

This high quality, weekly e-magazine is read by over 300 000 subscribers and reaches Canada's MPs, MPPs, journalists, ambassadors, academia, as well as Islamic centers and organizations across the globe as a trusted source of Islamic views and information.

To subscribe, email: cic-fb-request@news.canadianislamiccongress.org

OVERVIEW OF OUR ON GOING PROJECTS

- **2002 CIC Anti-Islam in the Media** – Conducting a first-of-its-kind annual media watch study of Canada's top English and French daily newspapers (Montreal Gazette, La Press, Ottawa Citizen, Toronto Star, Globe and Mail, Toronto Sun, National Post and others), Maclean's, Reader Digest and CBC TV Newsworld. A documented annual report is published every fall since 1998.

- **CICs Public Library project**– Distribution of a set of free books and materials selected to help a wide range of Canadians understand Islamic beliefs and teachings. The project began almost immediately after 9/11 because of the demand from libraries.

  STUDENT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: To ask your local libraries if they are interested in receiving this set of high quality, free Islamic books. Please contact cic@cicnow.com

Be a member: $100/year, $50/year for youth [Ages: 13-23] or a life member ($1000) and/or donate.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please fill in and send to CIC if you are interested in donating, volunteering or becoming a member. (Please print)
Mr.__ Mrs.__ Miss__ First Name:_____ Last Name: _____
Address:_____ City:_____
Province:_____ Postal Code:_____ Telephone: _____ Fax: _____
Email: _____

420 ERB ST. W. SUITE 424, WATERLOO, ON, N2L 6K6
PHONE: 519-746-1242 FAX: 519-746-2929
email: cic@canadianislamiccongress.com
http://www.canadianislamiccongress.com

Journey to Islam

...a reminder of the inherent beauty in Islam.

The night was hot and sticky. I don't know how I woke up without an alarm clock, but I was thankful that I did and I wondered how long it would be until dawn. I looked around the room. The rusty ceiling fan whirred like a car engine while the entire household lay asleep in front of me on cots and mats. The smell of incense and cooking oil flooded my nostrils while the heat seemed to be pulling beads of sweat from my skin. I stood up, judging to see whether everyone was really sleeping or not. My uncles all snored away, confirming their slumber. If that didn't wake the others up, nothing would, I thought. I tiptoed out, trying not to step on my cousins who were on the floor, and slipped through the doorway of stringed beads into a kitchen. There was no clock to tell the time. The sounds of the fan and snoring were now replaced with chirping crickets. I looked down the hall, and I found a room with a bucket of water- the bath. I washed up, welcoming the cool water on my limbs, and clambered back into the kitchen.

Now what? When is dawn, I wondered? What if someone woke up to find me standing in the kitchen? I just stood... and soaked in my surroundings. The smell was different, the heat, the sounds. I felt sleep tug back at me... my eyelids descending.

Then it came. Simple and deep, unpretentious, and honest...distant, and so beautiful:

"Allahu akbhar... Allahu akbhar..."

My heart heaved a sigh... my soul melted into an ocean of tranquility. I felt the blood drain from my face as I was left breathless. It suddenly dawned on me; they give the call to prayer out to the streets in this country. It was my first night back in India, and it caught me off guard. It was my first *adhan* not in the confines of some *masjid.* "*Allahu akbhar*" I replied under my breath, as I floated to the open window in front of me. I grabbed the iron bars and gently rested my forehead against them, searching into the black night for the voice. A breeze cooled the back of my neck, still wet from *wudhu*, and water dripped from my chin. I closed my eyes.

It came again. *"Allahu Akbhar, Allahu Akbhar..."* It was an old man; his voice was shaking, no microphone or loudspeaker, and he couldn't be too far off. I listened and basked in the sincerity of his call. Inside, I was weeping like a baby but my body was too captivated to react; my being knew nothing but obedience. The voice of the elderly *muadhin* faded into the night as the message was delivered. Everyone still slept. Crickets chirped, fans whirred. I took two steps back, and looked around. On my right, a picture of the Hindu elephant deity Ganesha stared silently at me. A dried-out garland hung pointlessly around it, and food they offered below lay idle and uneaten. A familiarity came into my mind, but with regret. So many years I had worshipped you and your friends, I thought to the picture, because I was raised to do so. But today, you couldn't even eat the food that was left for you, and a thumbtack was all that held you up in sight. What would you do for me? Every trip I had made to India, I had come as your devotee in hope that you would somehow save me and give me a good job when I grew up.

But this time around, I would pray to Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, the true God. It is only He who is The Great, the Unseen, the Most Merciful, the Creator, the Eternal, the Loving. I would pray as a Muslim. I turned away from the idol in silent regret for years of wasted worship, and faced the window. Which way was Mecca? I couldn't tell; the call to prayer had been made and I was going to answer it. I opted to face where I had heard the voice coming from.

A sound came from the room. Someone stirred in their sleep. My blood froze. Someone would come and catch me praying, I feared. After a few seconds, there was nothing but silence. I swallowed my fears, facing the window with trust and determination. I could feel Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* watching over me, and it made me brave. Then, I lifted my hands up to my ears, paused, and with an "*Allahu Akbhar*", entered into submission...

* * *

My trip to India had come one month after I took the *shahadah*, the statement of faith to enter Islam. Retrospectively, it was an experience that nurtured my budding faith and allowed me to understand the reality of the things around me. I knew my family there would be enraged if I revealed the secret of my reversion. I came from a large, traditional "pure and untouched" Brahmin line. In terms of Hindus, that meant that they were basically at the top of the caste system, a source of great pride for them. As well, our family lived in one of the few Muslim-majority cities which meant that the differences between "us" and "them" had been drilled into our subconscious since childhood. I had seen the after-effects of riots and the scars of communal violence. In my two times that I snuck out to the local mosque for Friday prayers, even the elders there told me that revealing my change to the public would put me in danger.

I had suddenly became one with the people that I had taken for my whole life as "the enemy". I had switched sides for the sake of truth in a place where religious beliefs were very rigidly defined- and seldom changed. That trip early in my life as a Muslim strengthened me. It made me love everyone- Muslim or non-Muslim- more than I ever had. It was three weeks of secret praying on the rooftops, silent *salaams* when we encountered a brother on the road, smiling politely through anti-Muslim conversations, and nights spent in the remembrance and contemplation of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*. I begged Him to give me guidance and I pondered on what it meant to be a Muslim...

My earliest memories of Islam are all the typical stereotypes that the people around me had. Growing up, I was always told that Muslims were terrorists. They were all violent, heartless and cruel. They had a history of war and plunder. Many people asked me if I was Muslim when I was younger. "Ewww no!" I would respond in disgust, "Hindu for life!" I didn't know why, I just thought it had to be that way. The

Muslim boys at school looked just like me, spoke the same language, and were even from the same places "back home"- so how come they were a different religion? I could not understand how their families got sucked into such a barbaric belief.

I was told that the Moghul emperors invaded India hundreds of years ago and put a sword to the throats of millions of people, forcing them to convert or die, and that's how Muslims came about in the Subcontinent. And each and every Muslim, even the nice-looking ones, had a bloodthirsty side to them. For crying out loud, if their rulers were so corrupted, imagine the ordinary person!

Somehow, I realized, either every Muslim I met was in a neurotic denial of their conversion by force, or they had all conveniently forgotten about it. I mean, just read the history books, I told myself, Islam was spread by the sword!

And their women? They were all caged pigeons, I thought. They were wrapped up in bedsheets and married in the twos and threes. They had no rights and were oppressed both in the home and outside. Most of the covered ones were always quiet and kept looking at the floor in fear of men. "I would die before I accept Islam," I boasted to a friend, "I would never even think of a religion that treats its women so badly."

I had decided then, during high school, that Islam was just empty and ruthless. There was no need to look further into it. So when my period of searching for spirituality came, I thought I knew where *not* to waste my time looking. Ironically, most of my friends in high school were Muslims. I would spend hours trying to debate against Islam, and why it was the wrong way, and every time, I came out confident that I was right. But inside I felt confused about my own religion even though I was very pro-Hindu and an active youth at the temple.

I had been raised close to the temple, learning all of the mythologies and concepts that any ordinary Hindu child was taught. As I grew older however, I began to question the fundamental aspects of that faith. As well, there was so much conflict in my mind. They worshipped statues, yet they always claimed the statue was just a focal tool for simple minds. They saw God in dozens of different forms to simplify our understanding of Him, yet always claimed He was One in the end. They claimed to have a way of life, yet they had no set code of conduct, only a culture which changed with the influence of the times. They believed in scriptures, but never validated where they came from, nor had most common men even seen a copy of these scriptures. Most of the intelligentsia dismissed the stories in the religion as mythological, as parables to draw examples from, while others were staunch in their belief about various things they could never substantiate. They claimed to follow a religion, but really it seemed like a collection of religions- everybody had a different view of the truth and even that inconsistency was fine. They claimed that statues were thousands of aspects of God, with incarnations and treatises written and abrogated by human beings as just preliminary steps to enlightenment. I wondered why I couldn't just skip it all and get to that reality? I wanted to be close to God but all these steps and stages made me feel distant from achieving an understanding of Him.

Every week I went to the temple to see the statues beautifully decorated and cared for with reverence and love. Then one day, in a ravine behind the temple, I found some of those same deities lying naked in a creek, broken in half, their painted faces faded away. I thought to myself, How could this be even close to what God, the Creator, is really like? Something inside me felt that I had to start seeking the truth actively- I didn't want the storybook version of truth, or the meditation aids, or the universal "feel-good" values. I was grateful for the general good values that the faith had taught me but every religion had them. I was already past the point of knowing that helping others was good, and that cheating and stealing were bad. I needed to know what was really out there. I was looking for the "real" way of life. But I didn't see it around me.

So I became an atheist for a time. I stopped believing in God. If the Creator was divided into a confusing bunch of "demi-gods", tangible mannequins and fantastic stories I was just supposed to swallow up with good faith, I wanted none of it. I became very cynical. Later, I left this mentality when it dawned on me that just because I didn't like the way Hinduism expressed the idea of a Supreme Being, it didn't mean I had to abandon my search. After all, I saw hints of a Creator all around me. And although my skeptical self hated to admit it, I also felt this same Creator inside my heart.

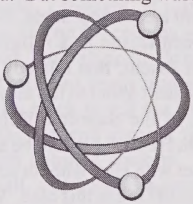
My Christian missionary friends gave me a copy of the Holy Bible, which I began to read day and night. I became interested in the idea of One God, unseen and separate from mankind. I began attending church on and off with them for most of my high school years, all the while hanging on to my old identity, and still having no solid belief inside. If it was one thing, I appreciated the stories of the prophets and I fell in love with the personality of Jesus *('alayhi assalaam)*.

Although my Christian influence constantly pushed the "divinity" of Jesus *('alayhi assalaam)* at me, it didn't stick. I had been raised in a religion, albeit to a greater extent, that mistook men for gods and I wasn't about to fall into that mentality again. If the Supreme Being was who I thought He was, I would be able to directly connect with Him without an intermediary, or a son of God in this case. When I learned about the origins of the Bible I had many issues with its compilation: the fact that it was mostly a 3rd-person narrative penned by men many of whom lived long after the events took place. This made me realize that it could have been subject to much alteration and human error.

I had come out of a faith that worshipped the creation, and I had decided I only wanted to worship its Creator. Faith was not a grocery store to pick and choose certain aspects and reject others, I told myself, and the true path is whole and complete, otherwise the validity of *all* of its beliefs come under question. I felt trapped inside myself as I drifted hopelessly to and from any buzz of spirituality I could find around me.

That's when I began to give up my "quest of truth". After all, I was just entering university at the time and I didn't need the distraction. I rejected all forms of organized religion and opted to worship the Unseen and Ultimate Being in my own way. He was One that did not take on human roles of father and child, He would seem consistent in His instructions to man over time, He would send us signs that we could verify, and one that would not expect me to accept illogical things as truth.

It was through all of this hopelessness, when I had stopped searching, that I came across a small book from one of my peers: Evolution Deceit. I picked it up almost laughing. The title told me that the book was in the genre of science, but when I saw the name of a Muslim author, I rolled my eyes. The first few pages didn't seem too religious at all. In fact, they spoke in very general terms. But when the scientific stuff came, it was almost always supported by a quote from the Qur'an. And it actually seemed logical. Science in the Qur'an? No way! What did a supposed textbook of terrorism have to do with empirical knowledge? I gave it a try, partially because I was bored waiting for my class to begin, and partially because I was amused by what I was sure was propaganda. But something wasn't right.



The book was making sense. And being in a science program at the time, it was relevant to the way I saw things. I didn't finish the book. Instead, I went on to skim similar Islamic books by same author. And I realized that he had really avoided making any religious assumptions; there were no attempts to play on my emotions, no sign of circular reasoning and no lack of proof. Luckily, my Muslim friend had a whole bunch of these types of books. And after I went through a few of them, I was very impressed. In fact, I wanted to know what sort of religious text was so clear about science. The verses quoted were not long bedtime stories, but more like sharp, bold statements spoken directly to me, coming from an unknown yet intelligent source. I began to understand certain proofs in these books and accepted them. Last time I checked, their prophet Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* never went to university. So who was the brilliant speaker of these words from the Qur'an?

Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, I was told. Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, meaning "The God" in Arabic. I wondered aloud 'You're saying that God Himself wrote the book?' Yes, was the simple response. He actually sends messages to humanity. I was told that Muslims believed in the original Torah and the Gospel too. It seemed mind blowing. How could this Muslim God send down a book for us? But if He was Supreme like I assumed, then it shouldn't be a problem for Him. But what about claims that the Qur'an was compiled by Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)*?

I decided to go back to all those arguments from high school that made me so sure that Islam was a waste of time. My pompous, argumentative personality and sense of pride made me easily dismiss Muslims and the religion they claimed to be truth.

I had to stop dismissing Islam like I had been doing for so many years. I had always disregarded Islam, and now it was back in my face, just asking, begging, to be proven wrong once and for all. So I would read about it every night sacrificing my sleep and my assignments so I could just know. I read as much as I could on the subject and tried to balance the perspectives I was getting. Many anti-Islamic websites I visited made claims about inconsistencies in the Qur'an and picked faults in Muhammad's *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* lifestyle. Many of the allegations against him were also common prejudices I had heard and believed before. To my dismay, all of the shocking allegations against Islam and its Prophet did not hold water when cross-referenced and researched. Really, I was surprised by how peaceful and caring a man Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* was. Once I began to separate the spurious assertions from the verifiable truth, I realized that Islam was a beautiful system which combined not only logical belief, but a realistic and legislated code of life. I saw that it taught mankind to respect everything around them- God, fellow humans, and even plants and animals.

The more I spoke to Muslims about my thoughts and feelings, the more I felt my doubt being replaced with fondness. The most attractive aspect of Islam was it was logical and truthful. The true path, I knew, was not just a way of life which catered to our desires. I had cross-examined and dissected Islam from every angle, and now my rationale gave my soul a green light. Once my heart and mind opened up without prejudice, I began asking Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, described as Beneficent and Merciful, for guidance. I read the Qur'an and felt Him reaching out to me. I read stories of the life of Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* and many times I was moved to tears by his sense of caring and compassion. I tried fasting in the month of Ramadan and felt this incredible sense of humilty and compassion for humanity. I began to invoke His name in my prayers and felt comforted. I still questioned- there were long conversations in coffee shops with learned people who saw I was searching and endless nights of reading and pondering, but the path of truth led me to Islam again and again. Months passed, and my conviction only grew stronger. I felt so close to Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, but still, a fear of displacement prevented me from acting upon that feeling. I wasn't born a Muslim, I told myself, although Islam is truthful and I have grown to love it. Hinduism stressed moral universal values and I could not see ultimate truth lying within it, but wasn't I born as a Hindu? Wasn't that a will of God? Again, the answer came from the Qur'an : guidance and truth is for everyone, regardless of which home they were born into. Someone I met asked me, "What religion are you?" "I am a Muslim." I replied without a second thought. Then I paused. And I realized what I had said. And then I knew I could not deny the truth any longer.

I read that Islam believed each and every child was born with the quality of *fitrah*- a sort of innocence and purity that gave them an automatic connection with Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*. It made so much sense- Every child is born knowing the Creator, it is their parents and environment that cause them to deviate from His path. I concluded to myself that since I came into this world as a Muslim, born with an inexpressible knowledge of Allah's Oneness, it was only natural that I could come back to my roots after ignoring the call within me for 17 years.

I still could not believe that I was at the point of identifying myself as a Muslim. I thought back about those days of degrading Islam and Muslims and I felt embarrassed. My search for truth was not inspired by personal life problems or emotional issues, but by my questioning and rationalistic nature. Guidance from Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* came to people in so many ways, I noticed. This was how Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* had wanted me to see His way. Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* was giving me what my soul needed to reunite with. It was the most beautiful gift ever given to me, the gift of Islam.

* * *

The night was warm, and everyone had gone to bed early. Except for me. For the first time in a while, it was Friday night in Toronto and there was nowhere to go. I was supposed to be studying for final exams, but instead I opted to pass my time

on the computer. The air conditioning made the room cool and comfortable. The only sound was the periodic clicking of my mouse and the squeaking of my chair as I leaned forward. My eyes were beginning to burn. I had tuned out of my online conversations with my friends long time ago, and their messages still blinked unanswered. It looked like this night was going to go by the way so many had before: reading about Islam. I had already been in the study for a few hours. I was engrossed in what I was reading, but unsatisfied. For months, it had been enough to read about Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, and the Qur'an, and about Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)*. And a research journey that had started with skepticism and doubt had now become a quest of hope and yearning. Sighing, I closed the article I was in the middle of. I stared out of the window in front of me and into the night. I felt restless. I knew all this theory about Islam, and it was settled deep in my heart. I wanted to know how such a perfect system was applied to practical life. And books and casual conversations were not filling the void inside of me. My eyes drifted across my desk and came upon my keys. I wanted to settle this issue of Islam inside of me *right now*, but where would I go at this time in the night? I remembered hearing of a mosque ten minutes away but it would be closed, I thought. I had never been to one before and I didn't know what going there would accomplish, but something spurred me to get up.

I grabbed my keys and put my baseball cap on and I was out the door in a heartbeat. As I stepped out, I felt a cool summer breeze play across the nape of my neck. I jumped into the car and drove for a while, until a chalk white building came up on the left. The lights were on inside. I pulled into the parking lot. Getting out, I ran up some steps and stopped right at the door of the mosque. My heart was pounding. What was I doing here? What were people still doing here? I couldn't see anyone on the property, but the lit windows and cars parked told me people were inside. Oh yeah, I thought, they were here to perform the night prayer that I had read about.

Then I heard hurried footsteps, and someone came up behind me. I jumped in surprise, and in the night I could make out a youth, probably my age. It was someone I recognized from high school. He was equally surprised; surprised to see me at the doorstep of the mosque because he knew how much I used to ridicule Muslims. "I just wanted to ask some questions about Islam," I stammered. He smiled and he invited me in. We removed our shoes on a mat and he led me down a dark hall lined with frosted glass on one side. This place looked scary, I thought. All of a sudden, a sound came out of nowhere.

"Allahu Akbar!"

Now, I was scared. I had never heard those words in real life before. Through the frosted glass, I could see a line of men with beards gracefully fall to their knees and descend out of sight. I stopped, too frightened to move forward. All the research and learning I had done went away in a flash. All of my past prejudices came back into my head. What if they beat me up for not joining them? They all looked so tough and scary. "C'mon, it started!" urged the youth. "Are you sure I am welcome here?" I asked sheepishly. "Of course, just sit inside and wait till we are finished." With that, I nervously walked down the dark corridor, towards the light of two open doors. My head was down in fear, and I stepped into a room and first noticed the rich carpet. I looked up, and a big hall with tall windows was around me. I sat down on the ground in the back and watched the line of worshippers bow and rise. I noticed how there where people of all colors and different types of dress there standing humbly in the same line. The walls were bare and simple except for a few Arabic words hung up, probably verses of the Qur'an. I felt an aura of tranquility that began to take away my fear. As the worshippers ended their prayers, they raised their hands in supplication. Then, the leader of the prayer, the *Imam*, rose and walked right towards me. He was smiling and his face was glowing. He didn't look scary at all. In fact, as he greeted me and shook my hand warmly, I felt relaxed. I told him that I was here to learn, and right there, we sat on the carpet and began to speak. Soon, most of the worshippers left the hall, but a circle of young boys had sat around the two of us, listening to our conversation. The *Imam* and I spoke and I told him about my life, and my journey, and my stereotypes. He asked me to be open with him, and slowly, I asked him about every possible doubt I had ever had. His answers were simple, and his demeanor was very loving. Hours passed like minutes, late into the night, and I felt like I was dreaming. Everything began to make sense now. My theoretical knowledge began to connect with this yearning for Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* that I had inside myself. I asked, although I already knew, "How do I embrace Islam?" The boys who were watching us seemed to disappear right at that moment, and for what seemed like a peaceful eternity, I heard his words in Arabic and felt the depth of their meaning: I testify that there is no god except Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, and I testify that Muhammad *(sallAllahu alaihi wasallam)* is His Servant and Final Messenger. I repeated the words effortlessly and nodded to the *Imam*, our gazes locked with a look of knowing. I felt guidance wash over me, and I knew then that I had found what I had been searching for.

Abdullah Misra
University of Toronto (Scarborough)
4th yr, BBA

"If my servant comes closer to me by one span, I go towards him a cubit's length, if he comes to me a cubit's length, I go towards him an arm's length, and if he walks towards me I run unto him."

[Sahih Bukhari]

POETRY CORNER

A Dose of Reality

This ink bleeds the fury of its writer
The gloom of reality requires me to be as strong as a fighter
Food for thought they call it
yet my mind closest to starvation,
1000 and one drafts trying to express them closest to reality
God only knows this world is filled with insanity,
of those who claim to possess knowledge
the same ones that allege to being flawless
thrive on draining the blood out of the powerless.
Humbleness died along with unity and we're left map less
on a road led by bigots who can't even spell terrorists.
This system is filled with shady lawyers as politicians,
in it for their self-gain only to cause corruption.
Our primary source for knowledge is the television.
Sorry to interrupt your program
with a list of schisms and isms,
the last one is Bushism: ideology based on ignorance,
the complete lack of knowledge and concern for existence.
The loss of direction has our system crashed,
those who claim to be open-minded have their ignorance stashed-
for a rainy day.
Kings are blind to moral fiber but see the green,
claiming righteousness as their people bleed.
Blood formed its own sectors
called Muslims and non.
The rest of the world is complacent enough to be used as pawns
Justice? She's become not only blind but deaf to the yells,
in fact justice can be found at the Guantanamo Bay cells
she's on vocation at the UN as well
while Palestinians and Iraqis are subjected to hell.
The worlds become superficial with Hollywood and wannabe Spears.
Meanwhile the Middle East lingers with floods of blood and tears.
I try to force tears from coming by shutting my eyes real tight
but what I shut out in the day, resurfaces in dreams at night.
Regardless, what we disregard today only worsens our plight.

Amal A. Mohamed, University of Toronto (St. George Campus)

THE BLESSED MONTH

A very simple task each year
Falls into our outstretched hands.
Fasting for a month, we hear
Is better than fruitful lands.

A month of reflection and of prayer-
We fast to purify our souls.
And as does a skilful brick layer,
We add and lay out more goals.

From dawn till dusk we abstain
From every idle sin.
And although it may now give us pain,
In the end we'll surely win.

During this time we realize
So many important things.
We have a chance to change our lives
And add to our outstretched wings.

So as the end of the month comes near,
We begin to understand
That we are very small and mere
Like tiny grains of sand.

The only element that separates us
Is this difference that we make
By living our lives to the fullest,
And perfecting the opportunities we take.

Anon.

He Whose Heart Slept Not

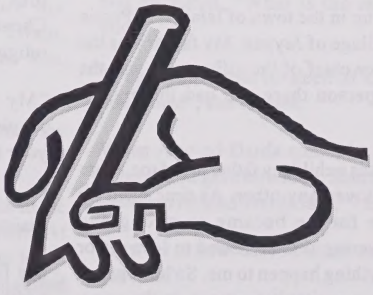
On sublime morals was he,
to the seventh heaven he went.
The best of creation,
past the furthest lote tree he did not relent.

His sight did not waver,
on God he was intent.
Even the blessed Angel had his limit,
lest his wings with fire rent.

But not so the Praised one.
He saw of his Lord the greatest sign,
Revealed to no other creature as fine.
He came with nothing less than inspiration divine,

Sent by the Revolver of Hearts,
with a Book and Religion for all time.
Service to God alone was the message
al-Amin brought,
The one whose eyes slept, but whose heart did not.

Mohammed Rustom, University of Toronto
Islamic Studies & Philosophy



Great Muslim:

If we take a random sample of university students nowadays and ask them about their objectives in life, some would say finding a well paying job, others becoming rich and famous, driving a brand new convertible, and/or finding a suitable partner. For most of us, happiness in life is often measured in such worldly terms. However, in the case of the great companion whom we will talk about today, happiness in life was none of the above. He actually left behind all the luxuries of life and chose to migrate to Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala*) in a long journey full of great hardships. He verily knew deep down in his heart that being famous in this life would not help on the day where a man flees from his own children, parents and spouse; he realized that it is meaningless if all people on earth are happy with him, while the Creator of people is angry with him; and he recognized that gold, silver and other currencies on this earth can not be used on the Day of Judgment. This is a story of a seeker of truth, the story of a man with a genuine passion to find the straight path. This is the story of the beloved companion Salman the Persian (*radi'Allahu 'anhu*).

He went on his journey without a guide, compass, or map. He just had a clear objective and trusted that Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala*) would guide him to the straight path and would never lead him astray. But where did this adventure lead him? And did he achieve his objective? In describing the wonderful journey of Salman the Persian (*radi'Allahu 'anhu*), I found nothing better than the words of Salman the Persian himself:

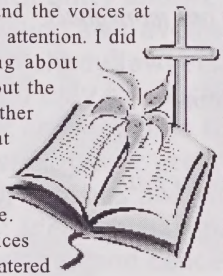
"I grew up in the town of Isfahan in Persia in the village of Jayyan. My father was the *dihqan* or chief of the village. He was the richest person there and had the biggest house.

Since I was a child my father loved me, more than he loved any other. As time went by his love for me became so strong and overpowering that he feared to lose me or have anything happen to me. So he kept me at home, a veritable prisoner, in the same way that young girls were kept.

I became devoted to the Magian religion so much so that I attained the position of custodian of the fire which we worshipped. My duty was to see that the flames of the fire remained burning and that the fire did not go out for a single hour, day or night.

My father had a vast estate which yielded an abundant supply of crops. He himself looked after the estate and the harvest. One day he was very busy with his duties as *dihqan* in the village and he said to me:

"My son, as you see, I am too busy to go out to the estate now. Go and look after matters there for me today."



On my way to the estate, I passed a Christian church and the voices at prayer attracted my attention. I did not know anything about Christianity or about the followers of any other religion throughout the time my father kept me in the house away from people. When I heard the voices of the Christians I entered the church to see what they were doing.

I was impressed by their manner of praying and was drawn to their religion. "By God," I said, "this is better than ours. I shall not leave them until the sun sets."

I asked and was told that the Christian religion originated in *AshSham* (Greater Syria). I did not go to my father's estate that day and at night, I returned home. My father met me and asked what I had done. I told him about my meeting with the Christians and how I was impressed by their religion. He was dismayed and said:

"My son, there is nothing good in that religion. Your religion and the religion of your forefathers is better."

"No, their religion is better than ours," I insisted.

My father became upset and afraid that I would leave our religion. So he kept me locked up in the house and put chains on my feet. I managed, however, to send a message to the Christians asking them to inform me of any caravan going to Syria. Before long, they got in touch with me and told me that a caravan was headed for Syria. I managed to unfetter myself and, in disguise, accompanied the caravan to Syria. There, I asked who was the leading person in the Christian religion and was directed to the bishop of the church. I went up to him and said:

"I want to become a Christian and would like to attach myself to your service, learn from you and pray with you."

The bishop agreed and I entered the church in his service. I soon found out, however, that the man was corrupt. He would order his followers to give money in charity while holding out the promise of blessings to them. When they gave anything to spend in the way of God however, he would hoard it for himself and not give anything to the poor or needy. In this way, he amassed a vast quantity of gold. When the bishop died and the Christians gathered to bury him, I told them of his corrupt practices and, at their request, showed them where he kept their donations. When they saw the large jars filled with gold and silver they said:

"By God, we shall not bury him." They nailed him on a cross and threw stones at him.

I continued in the service of the person who replaced him. The new bishop was an ascetic who longed for the Hereafter and engaged in worship day and night. I was greatly devoted to him and spent a long time in his company".

After the death of this bishop, Salman attached himself to various Christian religious figures, in Mosul, Nisibis and elsewhere. The last one told Salman about the appearance of a Prophet in the land of the Arabs who would have a reputation for strict honesty, who would accept a gift but never consume charity *(sadaqah)* for himself, and who would have the seal of the Prophets between his shoulders.

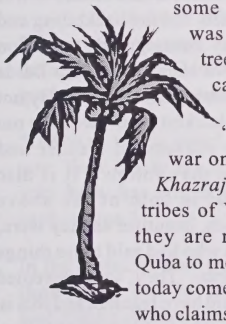
Salman continues his story:

Salman the Persian

"A group of Arab leaders from the Kalb tribe passed through Ammuriyah and I asked them to take me with them to the land of the Arabs in return for whatever money I had. They agreed and I paid them. When we reached *Wadi al-Qura* (a place between Madinah and Syria), they broke their agreement and sold me to a Jew. I worked as a servant for him but eventually he sold me to his nephew who belonged to the tribe of *Banu Qurayzah*. This nephew took me with him to Yathrib, the city of palm groves, which is how the Christian at Ammuriyah had described it.

At that time, the Prophet Muhammad (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) was inviting his people in Makkah to Islam but I did not hear anything about him then because of the harsh duties which slavery imposed upon me.

When the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) reached Yathrib after his *hijrah* from Makkah, I was in fact at the top of a palm tree that belonged to my master, doing some work. My master was sitting under the tree. A nephew of his came up and said:



"May God declare war on the *Aws* and the *Khazraj* (the two main Arab tribes of Yathrib). By God, they are now gathering at Quba to meet a man who has today come from Makkah and who claims he is a Prophet." I felt hot flushes as soon as I heard these words and I began to shiver so violently that I was afraid that I might fall on my master. I quickly got down from the tree and spoke to my master's nephew. "What did you say? Repeat the news for me."

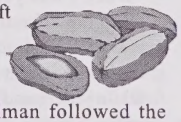
My master was very angry and gave me a terrible blow. "What does this matter to you? Go back to what you were doing," he shouted.

That evening, I took some dates that I had gathered and went to the place where the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) had alighted. I went up to him and said:

"I have heard that you are a righteous man and that you have companions with you who are strangers and are in need. Here is something from me as *sadaqah*. I see that you are more deserving of it than others."

The Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) ordered his companions to eat but he himself did not eat of it.

I gathered some more dates and when the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) left Quba for Madinah I went to him and said: "I noticed that you did not eat of the *sadaqah* I gave. This however is a gift for you." Of this gift of dates, both he and his companions ate".



A few days later, Salman followed the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) to the Baki'i and observed him burying one of the companions and he was able to see the seal of the Prophets on his back, between his shoulders. At this moment, Salman realized that this is the Prophet of the land of Arab, he started crying and fell on his knees, kissing the Prophet's hands. Salman then accepted Islam and told the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) about his story. When the *Muhajireen* and *Ansar* heard Salman's story, they both claimed that Salman was one of them. But the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) said to them "Salman is One of Us, the people of the house (the family of the Prophet-*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*)".

Salman was released from slavery by the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) who paid his Jewish slave-owner a stipulated price and who himself planted an agreed number of date palms to secure his manumission. After accepting Islam, Salman, when asked whose son he was, would say:

"I am Salman, the son of Islam from the children of Adam."

Salman was to play an important role in the struggles of the growing Muslim state. At the Battle of *Khandaq*, he proved to be an innovator in military strategy. He suggested digging a ditch or *khandaq* around Madinah to keep the Quraysh army at bay. When Abu Sufyan, the leader of the Makkans, saw the ditch, he said, "This stratagem has not been employed by the Arabs before."

Salman became known as "Salman the Good". He was a scholar who lived a rough and ascetic life. He had one cloak which he wore and on which he slept. He would not seek the shelter of a roof but stayed under a tree or against a wall. A man once said to him: "Shall I not build you a house in which to live?" "I have no need of a house," he replied.

The man persisted and said, "I know the type of house that would suit you." "Describe it to me," said Salman.

"I shall build you a house which if you stand up in it, its roof will hurt your head and if you stretch your legs the wall will hurt them."

Later, as a governor of al-Mada'in (Ctesiphon) near Baghdad, Salman received a stipend of five thousand *dirhams*. This he would distribute as *sadaqah*. He lived from the work of his own hands. When some people came to Mada'in and saw him working in the palm groves, they said, "You are the *amir* here and your sustenance is guaranteed and you do this work!"

"I like to eat from the work of my own hands," he replied. Salman however was not extreme in his asceticism. It is related that he once visited Abu ad-Darda with whom the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) had joined him in brotherhood. He found Abu ad-Darda's wife in a miserable state and he asked, "What is the matter with you."

"Your brother has no need of anything in this world", she replied.

When Abu ad-Darda came, he welcomed Salman and gave him food. Salman told him to eat but Abu ad-Darda said, "I am fasting."

"I swear to you that I shall not eat until you eat also."

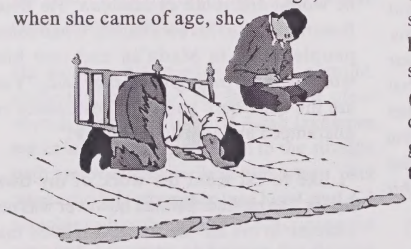
continued on page 27...

Great Muslimah: Umm

Knowing the stories of the great Muslim men and women that have come before us is of great importance. Their lives are an exemplary embodiment of Islam and thus, their names and stories should never be forgotten. Such lives serve as a source of great inspiration to Muslims everywhere. It is with the utmost pleasure and honour that I share with you the story of a companion of the Messenger of Allah (*radi'Allahu 'anha*). Her name is Umm Darda Al-Sughra, and her story is one that I hope we will all remember and share with our loved ones, especially the children of our *Ummah*.

As a Child

Umm Darda was an orphan under the care of Abu Darda, whom she later married. As a child Umm Darda would often hide under the cloak of Abu Darda and pray along with him in the lines of men. At a very young age she had memorized the Qur'an, was a scholar of Islamic law, and sat in the circles of the *qura'a* to teach the Qur'an. A regular in the male circles of knowledge, when she came of age, she



was kindly asked by Abu Darda to join the lines and circles of women.

The Teacher

Numerous scholars of the early generations of Islam mention Umm Darda's expertise in Islamic law, specifically stating her as an authority on the prayer of women. She is said to have been extremely fond of *'ilm* (knowledge) and *dhikr* (remembrance) of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, and many early scholars said that they would go to her home to sit in circles of *'ilm* (knowledge), *din* (religion), and spiritual concern.

'Aw ibn 'Abdillah, a *tabi'* scholar reports, "one day as we were in that state [at her home], she reclined and we asked 'have we bored you Umm Darda?'. She stood up at once and said, 'I have searched for and intended *'ibadah* (servitude) in everything I have done and I have found nothing better, sweeter, more relieving to my heart, and more rewarding in terms of what I desire, than being in the company of the people of *dhikr* (remembrance), in circles of *dhikr* of Allah!'"

Another student and *tabi'* scholar said, "When I was young, Umm Darda used to teach me *hikmah* (wisdom). One day as I was a young student of hers, she wrote for me on my tablet 'Learn *hikmah* (wisdom) while young and you will act upon it when you are older. And know that every soul will harvest of that which they planted of good or evil.'"

Her love and regard for knowledge, acting upon it, and remembering Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* in all that she did, is quite evident in such accounts of her life. These should, by the Grace of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)*, serve as reminders to all of us, indicating how we *should,* and, indeed, *must* live if we sincerely seek the pleasure of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* and the fulfillment of our duty on earth. Far too often we are guilty of 'fitting' Islam into our lives rather than fitting our lives into our Islam.

Her Excellent Character *(Akhlaq)*

One day a man came to Umm Darda and said "someone spoke ill of you in front of 'Abd al-Malik [the Caliph/ruler of the time]". She replied, "If someone speaks of us in an ill manner or in such a way that is not characteristic or true of us, how often have we been praised for things that are not true of us either. So if someone spoke ill of me and it's not in me, so what? — How often have people spoken good of me and that good is not in me either! People praise me by that which I am not, so if they criticize me by that which I am not, so what? *Alhamdulillah*."

Another time a man came to her in a study circle, and she inquired about al-Harrith [an evil-doer of the time, who had transgressed greatly], saying: "tell me about that liar". The man answered "oh dear mother, they say that you have given him allegiance." The man narrates further, "Umm Darda did not ask me who it was that spoke such a lie because she did not want to know. She did not want to have any rancour in her heart for anyone because she desired to keep her heart in a state of stillness — holding no rancour nor hate, for anyone!"

Again, the righteous character of this noble woman forces us to see our shortcomings. *Subhan'Allah* how beautiful and truthful are her words! Yes, people may ridicule us and concoct lies against us, but how often are we praised by the like of which we are not! When we hear that something bad has been said about us, the first thing we want to do is find out who said it so that we may correct it. What we fail to see is the ultimate harm it will cause, not only to our relationship with the person, but most importantly, the rancour and unease it will create in our hearts and the backbiting and slander that may consequently result on our part. Thus we learn from Umm Darda the wisdom of cutting off this evil. By not asking who has backbitten us, we save our hearts and any subsequent slander and quarrelling that may follow. It is also noteworthy that in both of the above accounts, the men, beautiful as they were, did not mention who had said these things about Umm Darda. They, too, prevented the evil that would have resulted and this is evidence of their love for each other as they prevented ill feelings from entering her heart.

In Family Life-

Ibrahim ibn Adham reports Umm Darda as having told him that when Abu Darda married her, he said to her, "Look, we're going to get married. And when you see me angry, please me. And when I see you angry, I shall please you — for if not, we will not continue together". Ibrahim ibn Adham thus says to Baqi'a, his friend and brother in Islam, "this is how brothers should be; otherwise that brotherhood will not continue either". These are words we

Darda Al-Sughra

must all pay heed to. The tendency nowadays, perhaps more than ever before, is to immediately want to argue with someone who is upset or angry. The words of Abu Darda and Ibrahim ibn Adham are full of real *rahmah* (loving compassion) and *hikmah* (wisdom) and something that we should all seek to apply to our lives if we intend to elevate our souls from a lowly, base level to a higher angelic state of servitude to Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* in all that we do. As our teacher, Shaykh Mokhtar Maghraoui thus told us, "if your brother, sister, husband, or wife get angry — and hopefully this too is within the context of proper *akhlaq* (character), please them. Do not think of challenging them at that time, and when you are upset, they shall do the same; otherwise, it will not work".

Finally, one time Umm Darda turned in *du'a* (supplication) to Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* and said, "Oh My Lord, Abu Darda asked me for marriage in this *dunya* (world) and he married me in this *dunya*. Oh Allah, I ask you to make him my husband in *Jannah* (Paradise) — I ask You for *his* hand in *Jannah*!". She then went to Abu Darda and said, "my dear husband, I want to be your wife in *Jannah*!" He replied, "then marry no one after me" [an expression of love between this particular couple, not a *Shariah* law]. It is said that in addition to being kind, wise, and pious, Umm Darda was also a woman of great beauty. When Abu Darda passed away, Mu'awiyya ibn Abi Sufyan (the Caliph/ruler) came to ask her for her hand and she said, "No, I shall not marry you nor anyone else, until I marry Abu Darda in *Jannah*!"

And she died, May Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* be well pleased with her, after having lived a very fruitful life and *insha'Allah* she's there, in *Jannah*, the wife of Abu Darda (May Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* be well pleased with them both).

May Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* increase us in knowledge and practice of that knowledge, and may He, Mighty and Majestic, beautify our character and make us from amongst those who earn His good pleasure. [*Ameen*]

Note: The above glimpses into the life of this great Companion of the Messenger of Allah *(subhana wa ta'ala)* was based on a talk entitled *"You Educate a Woman, You Educate a Nation"* given at the ISNA Canada Conference in 2001, by Shaykh Mokhtar Maghraoui, who cites Dhahabi as the source of this biographical information. I also wish to convey an idea the *Shaykh* alluded to at the start if this talk. Namely, it was a suggestion that if there are individuals who have the ability to do so, it would be an excellent service to our *din* and community, that audio/video productions be produced telling us about the beautiful lives of the Companions and great Muslims Islam has produced.

Nosheen Mian, University of Toronto, 4th yr, Islamic Studies & World Religions

---

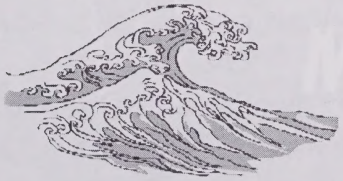
... 'Salman' continued from pg 27

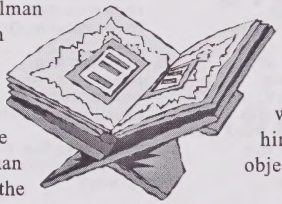
Salman spent the night there as well. During the night, Abu ad-Darda got up but Salman got hold of him and said:

"O Abu ad-Darda, your Lord has a right over you. Your family has a right over you and your body has a right over you. Give to each its due."

In the morning, they prayed together and then went out to meet the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*). The Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) supported Salman in what he had said.

As a scholar, Salman was noted for his vast knowledge and wisdom. Ali (*radi'Allahu 'anhu*) said of him that he was like Luqman the Wise *('alayhi assalaam)*. And Ka'b al-Ahbar said: "Salman is stuffed with knowledge and wisdom, an ocean that does not dry up." Salman had the knowledge of both the Christian scriptures and the Qur'an in addition to his earlier knowledge of the Zoroastrian religion. Salman in fact translated parts of the Qur'an into Persian during the life-time of the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*). He was thus the first person to translate the Qur'an into a foreign language.





Salman, because of the influential household in which he grew up, might easily have been a major figure in the sprawling Persian Empire of his time. His search for truth however led him, even before the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) had appeared, to renounce a comfortable and affluent life and even to suffer the indignities of slavery. According to the most reliable account, he died in the year thirty five after the *hijrah*, during the caliphate of Uthman, at Ctesiphon.

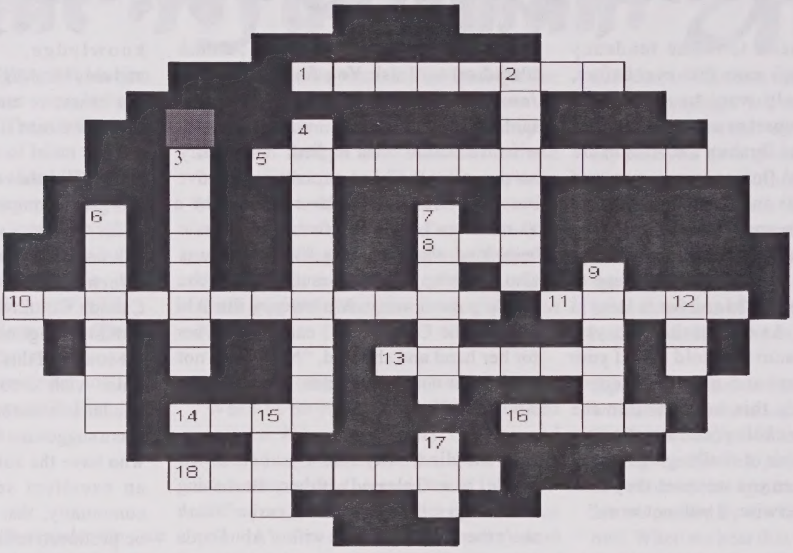
This is the story of Salman the Persian, a great man, distinguished companion and a role model for every truth seeker on this earth. I will conclude this story by answering the two questions I posed at the beginning of the story: where did this adventure lead him? And did he achieve his objective?

His persistence, patience, determination and sincerity led Salman ((*radi'Allahu 'anhu*) to the hands of the Prophet (*sallAllahu alaihi wasallam*) and to becoming a member of the Prophet's family. Salman found his way to Allah (*subhana wa ta'ala*) and to the straight path, and thus he achieved his objectives in this life. But the question remains whether we know our objectives and whether we would ever achieve them.

Reference:
"Companions of The Prophet", Vol.1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

Mohammed Alameddine
University of Toronto (St. George)
PhD, Health Policy

Propeht Muhammad (May Peace be Upon Him)



Across

1. The Prophet was born in the year of the _____
5. At which age did the Prophet die _____ ?
8. The first boy to embrace Islam was _____.
10. Who took care of the Prophet after his mother's death?
11. At what age did the Prophet receive the revelation from the entrusted Jibril?
13. Where was the Prophet born?
13. The Prophet immigrated from which City _____.
14. Khadijah was the Prophet's _____.
16. The Prophet received the revelation in Ghar _____.
18. Which if the prophet's companion's immigrated with him ?
18. Who was the first man to embrace Islam?

Down

2. _____ was the Uncle who always helped the Prophet but refused to become Muslim.
3. What was the name of the Prophet's Father?
4. At what age did the Prophet receive the order to immigrate?
6. Who was the first woman to embrace Islam?
7. In which City is Our Beloved Prophet Buried ?
7. The Prophet immigrated to which city _____.
9. Aminah is the _____ of the Prophet.
12. How many of the Prophet's Uncles did become Muslim?
15. How many girls did the Prophet have?
17. At what age was the Prophet Muhammad when his mother died ?

STUMPED?

See the Answers on pg 10

ɳ Muslims Meeting Muslims ɳ

Matchmaking Service

Free Registration!

416-992-0750

www.muslimsmeetingmuslims.com

Advertise in the TMV *ONLINE*:

www.tmv.ca

Visit our website

OR

e-mail us at **muslimvoice@yahoo.ca**

for more infomation

"Printing" for the job you needed yesterday

Your image reflects our image. The projects that ***Minuteman Press*** produces for your company is how you are judged by others. Therefore our reputation is on the line with every job that goes out our door. From newsletters to annual reports, our printing reflects your image. The fact that ***Minuteman Press*** enjoys a large customer retention is testimony to the high quality image that we create for each of our customers.

Making you look good is what we do best.

Don't Take Chances - Bring Your Next Project To The Experts At

MINUTEMAN PRESS®

Where Your Satisfaction Is Always Guaranteed.

Design

Print

Copy

Photography
Hi Res. Digital

Signs

Bindery

Receive 10% OFF any Order*

** Max value $ 500/-*
Limit 1 Per Customer. Must present coupon at the time of Purchase

905.625.7691
info@min-press.com
www.min-press.com

MINUTEMAN PRESS®

1015 MATHESON BLVD. E., UNIT # 2, Mississauga Ontario Canada L4W 3A4

NEW LOOK!

Maple Lodge FARMS LTD.

SLAUGHTERED ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC LAW

Zabiha Halal

INTRODUCING A NEW LOOK!

We offer Canada's widest selection of halal chicken products. Our *NEW* packaging makes Maple Lodge Farms Zabiha Halal products easier to find and we are now available in twice as many supermarkets. Pick some up today at your local supermarket!

- Fresh Chicken Parts
- Extra Lean Ground Chicken
- Breaded Chicken Burgers
- Chicken Burgers
- BBQ Chicken Wings
- Buffalo Style Chicken Wings
- Chicken Fillets
- Chicken Nuggets
- Chicken Breasts
- The Baron Chicken Frankfurters
- Chicken Wieners
- Chicken Loaf
- Chicken Bologna
- Chicken Breast 1/2 Roast
- Smoked Chicken Breast 1/2 Roast
- Chicken Breast Roast (Shingle Pack)
- Smoked Chicken Breast Roast (Shingle Pack)
- Chicken Polish Sausage
- Premium Extra Lean Ground Chicken

ISNA HALAL CERTIFICATION AGENCY
H حلال
ISNA Canada
CERTIFIED ZABIHA HALAL

Maple Lodge FARMS LTD.

For great recipe ideas visit our website at www.zabihahalal.com